
LIBER EPISTOLARUM BY HILDEGARD VON BINGEN

Hildegardis Bingensis: Liber epistolarum, ed. by Maura Zátonyi,
Mechthild Dreyer in collaboration with Andreas Kuczera, Thomas
Stäcker, Markus John, Christopher Keckstein, Iain Neill, Silke Kalmer,
Dario Kampkaspar

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COMPLETE LETTERS
Translated by Model GPT-4o

All Letters are from the **Wiesbaden Codex**. The Wiesbaden Codex (also Riesencodex "giant codex"), Hs.2 of the Hessische Landesbibliothek, Wiesbaden, is a codex containing the collected works of Hildegard of Bingen. It is a giant codex, weighing 15 kg and 30 by 45 cm in size. It dates from c. 1200, and was started at the end of her life or just after her death, at the instigation of Guibert of Gembloux, her final secretary.

The Letters were digitized from the Codex by:

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The letters were translated to English directly from the latin by AI
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Letter 1: R1: Pope Eugene III to Hildegard of Rupertsberg

Eugene, servant of the servants of God! To the beloved daughter in the Lord, Hildegard, prioress on the mountain of Saint Robert, greetings and apostolic blessing.

We are astonished, O daughter, and beyond what can be believed, we are amazed because God has shown new miracles in our times. For He has so filled you with His Spirit that it is said you see, understand, and speak many secrets. We have heard this from some trustworthy persons who confess that they have seen and heard you. But what can we say about these things, we who hold the key of knowledge, so that we can close and open, and yet neglect to do so wisely through foolishness?

We rejoice in the grace of God, we also rejoice in your love, reminding you to know that God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble. Therefore, preserve and guard this grace that is in you, so that what you feel must be spoken in the Spirit, you may speak prudently, so that you may hear, "Open your mouth, and I will fill it."

What you have indicated to us about that place which you have foreseen in the Spirit, let it be done with our permission and blessing and that of your bishop, so that you may live there regularly with your sisters according to the rule of Saint Benedict under the closure of the place.

Letter 1: R2: Hildegard of Rupertsberg to Eugene III

To Eugene, apostolic.

Hildegard. O gentle father, I, a poor little form, have written these things to you in a true vision in mystical inspiration, as God has willed to teach me. O shining father, you have come to our land in your name, as God has predestined, and you have seen the writings of true visions as the living light has taught me, and you have heard them in the embrace of your heart. Now the part of this writing is finished, but the same light has not left me, but it burns in my soul as I have had it from my infancy. Hence, now I send you these letters in the true admonition of God. And my soul desires that the light from the light may shine in you, and it may pour pure eyes upon you and stir your spirit to the work of this writing, so that your soul may be crowned with what pleases God! For many wise men from earthly hearts spread these things in the change of their minds because of the poor form that was built in the rib, and which is unlearned from philosophers. Therefore, you, father of pilgrims, listen to him who is. The mighty king sits in his palace, and great columns stand before him, girded with golden belts and adorned with many pearls and precious stones. But it pleased the king that he touched a small feather to fly in miracles, and a strong wind sustained it, that it might not fail. Now again the one who is the living light in the heavens and shining in the abyss and hidden in the secret hearing of hearts speaks to you. Prepare this writing for the hearing of those who receive me and make it green in the juice of sweet taste and the root of branches and flying leaf against the devil! And you will live forever. Beware lest you despise these mystical things of God, for they are necessary in that necessity which lies hidden and which does not yet appear openly. May the most sweet odor be in you, and do not grow weary on the right path. But he who

speaks and does not keep silent says these things because of the weakness of those who are blind to see and deaf to hear and mute to speak in the nocturnal snares of the deadly net of thieving customs. What is said? The radiant sword goes around, killing those who are of perverse mind. O you who are shining in your person with armor and the first root in the new marriages of Christ and divided into two parts: in this part, that your soul is renewed in the mystical flower of virginity, and in this part, that you are a branch of the church! Listen to him who is sharp in name and stream in the torrent, saying to you, "Do not reject the eye for the eye and do not cut off the light from the light, but stand on the straight path lest you be accused of the causes of those souls that are placed in your bosom, nor let them be plunged into the pit of perdition by the power of convivial prelates. A gem lies on the way! But a bear comes and, very elegantly sniffing it, extends its paw, wanting to lift it and put it in its bosom. But suddenly an eagle comes, snatches the same gem, and wraps it in the cover of its wings and carries it into the king's palace enclosure. And the same gem gives much splendor before the king's face. Hence, it is greatly loved by the king. And the king, for the love of that gem, gives golden shoes to the eagle and greatly praises its goodness. Now you, who sit in the place of Christ in the care of the ecclesiastical chair, choose the better part for yourself to be an eagle overcoming the bear and to adorn the enclosures of the church with the souls committed to you, so that coming in golden shoes to the heights, you may rescue yourself from the alien. For the living eye sees and says, "He who is wise and discerns every creature, who also awakens all, watches." The valleys lament over the mountains, and the mountains fall over the valleys. How? The subjects are stripped of the discipline of the fear of God, and therefore the ignorant ones ascend to the peaks of the mountains to accuse the prelates, and their temerity does not accuse their wicked deeds. But they say, "I am useful to be prelate for usefulness." And all the

works of the prelates are unworthy, because they disdain to be superior to themselves, since the subjects are now black clouds and are not girded in their thighs, but scatter all the institutions of the field, saying that these are vile. And they do this because they are venomous with envy. The poor man has great foolishness when his garments are torn, always looking at another, considering what color the other's garment has, nor does he wash his own from filth. But the mountains leap over the key of the way of truth, and their ways are not prepared to fly to the mountain of myrrh. Therefore, the stars are darkened by different clouds. The moon stands. The stars cry out that the moon falls. The sun precedes them, because none of them shines clearly, but they are entangled in a whirlwind. Hence, O great shepherd and named after Christ, give light to the mountains and a rod to the valleys. Give precepts to the teachers and discipline to the subjects, justice to the mountains sprinkled with oil, and the bond of obedience mixed with good odor to the valleys. And make their paths straight, so that they may not appear vile to the sole of justice. Make your eyes pure, so that you may have eyes everywhere. May your mind be watered by a pure fountain, so that you may shine with the sun and imitate the lamb. The poor little form trembles because it speaks in the sound of words to so great a master. But O gentle father, ancient man and magnificent warrior, says these things. Hence, listen. From the supreme judge, it is directed to you to eradicate the proud and impious tyrants and cast them out from you, lest they stand in their great mockery in your company. But be merciful to public and private misfortunes, for God does not despise the wounded nor the pains of those who tremble at Him. Hence, O shepherd of the sheep, hear these things about those laboring in the fatigue of many. The light says, "The mystical ones of God know judgment over each one according to his merit." But many men want to have scrutiny by their zeal and by the disgrace of their customs, but they do not know my judgment. Therefore, they lie beyond

measure in their estimation, like wolves snatching prey. Therefore, although a man is worthy to be judged for his crimes, yet it does not please me that a man wishes to have judgment according to his own decision. And this I do not want. But you discern each case according to the maternal bowels of God's mercy, for He does not separate the beggar and the needy from Himself, for He prefers mercy to sacrifice. Now, therefore, the black ones want to wash away their blackness by their own baseness, but they are polluted and deaf, lying in the pit. Raise them up and help the little ones. For you, who are the shepherd of the peoples, hear so that you may live forever. The living light says, "Tell the audacious people who find terrors in the way of errant paths. A certain lord had a marble city, and hunters coming to that city wanted to disperse its rightful institutions which appeared in that flower, which a virginal mind found. And behold, a great and exceedingly elegant mountain made of polished stones appeared against the east. Upon which a certain building stood to the east, made of wood and stones of common construction. Then many streams came flowing into the same building as if in the midst of the east. But also in the same building was a very strong smell of good wine, but mixed with water. And many people fell into the same building, walking with bent bodies in it. But others stood in a certain valley before the aforementioned mountain and watched those who were bent in the same building. And behold, upon the same mountain also stood another marble building of very white and intact stone, like a great tower against the north, in which a very bright vessel full of the best balsam hung like burning fire, and much oil flowed on its pavement. But the wind from the north sometimes coming stirred that balsam and oil. Then many from the people came to the same building, who also were sprinkled with that oil and marked on their foreheads with that balsam. And a voice came from heaven saying, "These are the marked ones." And those who were marked in this way could not

wash away this mark, but thus they remained marked, just as those who are reborn in Christ must preserve their baptism. But those who were marked did not pass over to those who were not marked, nor did they accept their company, for if they did, they would be called foolish and useless. But those who were not marked passed over to those who were marked and accepted their company and chose the best part for themselves, just as a star multiplies its splendor in a cloud, and just as a female form is crowned in virginity. And a great man girded with a golden belt standing above those buildings placed his right arm upon the marble building and his left arm upon the other. This understanding applies to the two instruments of ecclesiastical dignity. For the omnipotent Father established a noble part separated for secular causes, and in His secrets before God, burning with strength, which some insidious ones, despising, want to destroy by their straightness, which manifestly appeared in the Son of God. But yet the mountain of justice, polished in many justifications, ascends in the rising of truth, in which useful instruction tending to God and yet assisting men rises, giving light of usefulness to men, so that much teaching and the odor of right writings flow from the vigor of truth to it, which some of them often pour out in various ways without reason. Therefore, many in it bend in perversity, so that also some gaping at earthly things, imitate their baseness. But also on the same mountain of justice, the aforementioned part burning in its secrets before God rises in its integrity to resist the devil, having the best part in God and showing mercy in its example, but also multiple temptations sent by the devil disturb that best part and even the mercy itself. But many men pass over to the same part and attain true mercy when they choose the best part for themselves, hence they are called marked before God. And those who receive the mark of this part remain strong in it as in their baptism. Therefore, they do not descend socially to those who do not have the same mark, lest they become empty like fools, and

those who do not have the mark of the same part ascend socially to the same order and multiply in many goods. Which also shows him who is girded with a golden belt, showing himself to be God and man, governing both these and those, with the arm of His strength covering these, so that in Him they burn with strength, rejecting secular things, and with the arm of His gentleness covering those, so that they may be useful in divine protection, providing the light of truth beneficially to their neighbors. Now you who are the father of the peoples, discern these words in clarity, directed to you by the supreme judge for the necessity of the erring, because pride wants to oppress humility, which ought not to be, just as it would be inappropriate if the moon wanted to fight with the sun, wishing to make its splendor similar to its own splendor. Hence, for this inappropriate convenience, the fountain of waters cries out to you, my imitator, "By me the living and sharp, restrain and correct the black insidious ones and the thieving spies who are turned into lead in their twisted sins and who are sprinkled from the north in the iniquity of the devil and who extend themselves contrary to the head of their prelates by the excess of iniquity. Therefore, drive them from pastoral care, which carries the penalty of dogs. And although some prelates are overshadowed by the succession of customs, yet it is not fitting to cast off some of them because of certain subjects. Therefore, look at these things with the purest eye, so that your honor may not fail, which touches Him who was and is straight and just, preparing His ways in all His instruments, foreseeing them before in the institutions of ancient days. He makes your eyes pure, who does not despise the pupil and the poor, for you are the mountain of myrrh and incense above the valleys of the foul pit. Therefore, listen to him who always watches with living eyes and who is not tedious because of the storms, which are part of the cup of those who are likened to idols as if they were gods by their prosperity. But you who wish to have the power of the great honor

of the mountain in the king's palace, extend the justice of the highest to His honor. This befits you because of your glorious name. Now, therefore, look to the fiery giver who pours good understanding into men. But who can sound against that voice which thundered ascending above the heavens and which overcame the abyss, adorning it with the cover of maternal greenness? And what wings of the winds can run above that voice by their swiftness? Can this voice make a small feather fly so that no sword can move against the same feather? It can. Now you, O imitator of the exalted person, the living fountain, call out these things to you, because it does not befit your person to have the eyes of the blind and the steps of viperous customs, and stripping the altar of God by furtive robbery. And why would you do this? But he who does this cannot untie the thong of the shoe of the Lord's body. Therefore, O all, chastise yourselves. But I, O father, remain in the place shown to me from heaven according to the words of your blessing, according to the rule of Saint Benedict under the closure of the same place with my sisters, and this I desire to be observed always both while living and after death.

Letter 3: R3: Anastasius IV to Hildegard of Rupertsberg

Anastasius, bishop, servant of the servants of God! To Hildegard, beloved daughter in Christ, greetings and apostolic blessing.

We rejoice in the Lord, daughter, and we congratulate you because the name of Christ is glorified in you day by day, so that we, in wonder, say: "Who is like you among the mighty, O Lord? Who is like you? Magnificent in holiness, terrible and praiseworthy, and performing wonders." For we have heard and seen many things about you. We also know that our predecessor of blessed memory, to whom we have succeeded by divine grace in nourishing the bride of Christ, loved you with great affection, embraced you, and listened to you. We, following in his footsteps, have made it our concern to write to you and desire to see your responses, seeking what God is working in you, although we ourselves are deficient in goodness. In these matters, both from the weariness of our body and our mind, we sigh, for we do not raise ourselves to heavenly things by our negligence as we ought to by right. The knower of secrets knows our will and our capability. Therefore, we admonish, we ask, and we earnestly enjoin you, that with your sisters you offer prayers to the Lord, so that by His virtue we may be able to rise to righteousness, so that for this we may attain eternal rewards, not ceasing to long for these things in the present life. Peace be to you and to all yours.

Letter 4: R4: Hildegard of Rupertsberg to Anastasius IV

Hildegard.

O person who excels in armor and is a mountain of guidance in a very ornate city, who is established in the betrothal of Christ! Hear Him who has not begun to live, nor grows weary in weakness. O man who in the eye of your knowledge is weary of restraining the grandiloquence of pride in the men placed in your bosom! Why do you not call back the shipwrecked who cannot rise from their great falls without help? And why do you not cut off the root of evil, which chokes the good and useful herbs, the sweet taste and the most pleasant smell of the daughter of the king, that is, justice, which is in the heavenly embrace and which was entrusted to you! You neglect it. For you allow this daughter of the king to be trampled upon the earth, because the diadem and the beauty of her tunic are torn apart by the rusticity of various customs of those men who bark like dogs and like hens that sometimes attempt to crow in the night, emitting an inappropriate exaltation of their voices. These are simulators in their voices, showing a feigned peace, but inwardly gnashing in their hearts, like a dog that wags its tail at its known companions, but bites a good soldier who is useful in the king's house with its teeth. Why do you endure the depraved habits in men who are in the darkness of ignorance, gathering harmful things to themselves, like a hen that, crying in the night, strikes terror into itself? Those who do this are not rooted in usefulness. Therefore, hear, O man, Him who loves acute discretion greatly, which He established as the greatest instrument of righteousness to fight against evil. This you do not do when you do not eradicate evil, which desires to choke the good. But you permit evil to rise proudly, and you do this out of fear of those who are the worst insidious ones in nocturnal snares, loving the money of death more than the

beautiful daughter of the king, that is, justice. All the works that God has done are most bright. Hear, O man. For the heavenly Father thundered in His secret before the world's dawn: "O my Son," and the globe of the world arose, this because the Father thundered, receiving various species of creatures still lying in darkness. But in the very thing that is written "and God said, Let it be," various species of creatures proceeded. Thus by the Word and because of the Word of the Father, all creatures were made in the will of the Father. But God sees all things and foreknows all things. But evil, neither by rising nor falling, can do or create or work anything by itself, for it is nothing but a deceitful choice and a contrary opinion, so that man works evil when he does that which is contrary. But God sent His Son into the world that the devil, who knew evil by embracing it and suggested it to man, might be overcome by Him, and that man, who perished by evil, might be redeemed. Wherefore God despises perverse works, namely fornications, homicides, rapines, seditions, tyrannies, and the simulations of wicked men, for He crushed them by His Son, who utterly scattered the spoils of the infernal tyrant. Hence you, O man who sits in the principal chair, despise God when you embrace evil, so that you do not reject it but kiss it when you sustain it in wicked men in silence. And therefore the whole earth is troubled by a great succession of errors because what God has destroyed, man loves. And you, O Rome, as if lying in the extremities, will be troubled, so that the strength of your feet, on which you have stood until now, will languish, because you love the daughter of the king, that is, justice, not with burning love, but as if in the torpor of sleep, so that you expel her from you, and she herself wants to flee from you if you do not recall her. But yet great mountains, with the aid of the jawbone, still support you, lifting you up and supporting you with the great woods of great trees, so that you will not be entirely scattered in your honor, that is, in the decoration of the betrothal of Christ, but that you may have some

wings of your ornament until the nothingness of the diverse scorn of customs, emitting much madness, comes upon you. Therefore beware lest you want to mix yourself with the rite of pagans, lest you fall. Now hear Him who lives and will not be exterminated. The world is now in wantonness, afterward it will be in sadness, then in terror, so that men do not care to kill themselves. In all these there are sometimes times of petulance, and sometimes times of contrition, and sometimes times of various iniquities, of lightning and thunder. For the eye rages, the nose snatches, the mouth kills. But the chest will save, where the dawn, like the splendor of the first rising, will appear. This is what you desire in your dream and in your new study. They are not to be spoken. But He who is great without defect has now touched a small habitation to see its miracles and to form unknown letters and to utter an unknown tongue, and to sound a multifaceted but harmonious melody. And it was said to him: This that was shown to you in a tongue from above, you have not borne according to the form of human custom, for this custom was not given to you. He who has the file should not neglect to polish the fitting sound of men. But you, O man appearing as the established pastor, rise and run swiftly to justice, so that you are not accused before the great physician that you have not cleansed His sheepfold from filth nor anointed it with oil. Where, however, the will does not know crime, and where man has not seized desire, there man does not wholly fall into the depth of judgment, but the fault of this ignorance is cleansed by scourges. Therefore, O you man, stand on the right path and God will save you, so that He will bring you back into the stable of blessing and election, and you will live forever.

Letter 5: R5: Hadrian IV to Hildegard of Rupertsberg

Adrian, bishop, servant of the servants of God! To Hildegard, beloved daughter in Christ, prioress of Saint Robert, greetings and apostolic blessing.

We rejoice, daughter, and exult in the Lord because your reputation for virtue has spread far and wide, so that you become the fragrance of life to many, and from the faithful people a cry of praise goes up for you, "Who is this that ascends through the desert like a column of smoke?" Therefore, as we esteem your spirit to be so inflamed with the fire of divine love that you need no exhortation to do good works, we have deemed it unnecessary to multiply exhortatory words to you or to support your spirit, sufficiently strengthened by divine virtue, with some additional words. Yet, just as fire grows larger when fanned by a breeze and a swift horse is urged on by spurs, we have thought it fitting to place this before your devotion, namely, that it may not escape your memory that the palm and the glory are due not to the one who begins but to the one who completes, as the Lord says, "To the one who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of my God."

Therefore, consider, daughter, that the serpent who cast the first man out of paradise seeks to destroy the great, as he desired to destroy Job, and having devoured Judas, seeks the power to sift the apostles! And because you know that many are called, but few are chosen, place yourself among the number of the few, and thus persist to the end in holy conduct. Teach your sisters entrusted to your care to perform works of salvation, so that together with them you may be able to reach that joy, granted by the Lord, which no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man.

Furthermore, we desire to hear words of encouragement from you because you are said to be filled with the spirit of God's miracles. Hence, we greatly rejoice and give glory to divine grace.

Letter 6: R6: Hildegard of Rupertsberg to Hadrian IV

Hildegard.

He who gives life to the living says: O man, you will endure the dire hardness of lions and the strength of leopards in your suffering, and you will feel shipwreck in capturing prey, for in all these you are given to the fatigue of those who run to you. You possess a bird, an intelligent mind against the most savage habits of men, in which you will fervently restrain the manes of running horses who do not cease to run on the paths of prey. Yet, in struggling against yourself, you incline yourself to some extent to the probity of certain men, where you conceal the places of those who are dead to battle on the plain ways. Hence, you will endure the fight of the savagery of the wicked, but you will destroy the mobility of the remnants of those who go into the pit by their harshness. Nevertheless, you have a vein of the strongest key that does not willingly go to unleavened bread in the form of a sardius. Therefore, in your heart, seek the salvation of waters so that you do not go into the whirlwind but rest in gentleness towards the weariness and bruises of those who are mingled with the maceration of various wounds, in this imitating your Savior who redeemed you. But this grave weight of teaching that you carry is not in the indignation of God, where even the habits of bears and leopards and the venom of asps meet you and those who follow you, but the sword of God will kill them, so long as a good leader arises among them.

Now I advise you to bridle your subjects and not allow them to speak evil against you. Hence the true light says to you, why do you not strike the most wicked servants who secretly plot against you like spiders that sting? Therefore, watch diligently, for what is demanded is important because of the morals of the people in this time. O most gentle father, remember that you are a man on the

earth, and do not fear that God will abandon you, for you will see His light.

Letter 7: R7: Hildegard of Rupertsberg to Alexander III

To Alexander, Apostolic. From Hildegard.

O highest and most glorious person who was first established by the word of God, through which every rational and irrational creature was made according to its kind, to you specifically the same word has granted the keys of the heavenly kingdom through the clothing of His humanity, namely the power to bind and to loose. You, too, most excellent father, are the source of all spiritual persons, sounding the trumpet of God's justice in the Church, which shines adorned with various ornaments, while some provide good examples by imitating the lives of the saints. These people do not attribute any righteousness they do to themselves but to God, rejoicing in their good imitators, following earlier saints who subdued their flesh and strengthened themselves with a manifest victory of heavenly militancy against the vices of the devil, and with good will, they looked upon God as angels.

So you, O gentle father, imitate the benign father who joyfully received his penitent and returning son, killing the fatted calf for him and washing the wounds inflicted by robbers with wine, symbolizing the severity of correction and the mercy of compassion. Be the morning star that precedes the day's sun in the Church, which, long confused by the darkness of schism, lacks the light of God's justice. Therefore, according to the zeal of God, correct and anoint with the oil of mercy those who repent, for God desires mercy more than sacrifice.

Now, O most gentle father, my sisters and I bend our knees before your paternal compassion, praying that you may deign to look upon the poverty of this poor little form. We are now in great sorrow because the abbot of Mount Saint Disibod and his brothers oppose

our privileges and our election, which we have always had. We must always take great care that it is not taken from us, for if they do not grant us the fearful and religious men we seek, the spiritual religion within us would be utterly destroyed. Therefore, Lord, help us for God's sake, so that we may either retain our election or freely seek and receive others who will care for us according to God and our needs.

Now again we ask you, most pious father, not to despise our petition nor these messengers who, directed by our faithful friend, have come to us seeking your help, and to grant what they seek from you. So that after the end of this life, which is already drawing to an evening, you may enter into the unfailing light and hear the sweet voice of the Lord, "Well done, good servant. Because you have been faithful over a few things, I will set you over many; enter into the joy of your Lord." Therefore, incline the ears of your compassion to our supplications and be a bright day to us and to them, so that through the generosity of your indulgence we may all rejoice together in the Lord, and you may ever rejoice in eternal felicity.

Letter 8: R8: Alexander III to Wezelin of St. Andreas in Cologne

Response of Alexander to Wibert, Provost.

Alexander, servant of the servants of God, to the beloved son, the Provost of St. Andrew in Cologne, greetings and apostolic blessing.

You should know that we have received information from our beloved daughter in Christ, Hildegard, prioress of the Mountain of St. Robert in Bingen, and from her sisters in the same place, stating that when they elected a master and provost from the monastery of St. Disibod, as was their custom, the abbot of that place refused to grant them this person from his monastery and still declines to appoint that person.

Therefore, since it is proper to carefully provide for these sisters in matters pertaining to the salvation of souls, we mandate by apostolic writings that you, using your discretion, summon both parties to your presence when required concerning this matter. Having diligently heard and understood the reasons from both sides regarding the election of the provost, decide the case with justice. And if these sisters cannot have a provost from that monastery, ensure that they at least have a suitable one from elsewhere.

Letter 9: R9: Henry I of Mainz to Hildegard of Rupertsberg

To Hildegard from Heinrich, Archbishop.

Heinrich, by the grace of God, Archbishop of Mainz, to the beloved teacher Hildegard of the Mount of St. Rupert the Confessor, greetings with paternal affection.

Since we hear many good and admirable miracles about you, it is to be attributed to our negligence that we have not visited you as often as we could. But, impeded by many affairs, we can scarcely and slowly lift our minds to those things which are eternal.

However, to come to the matter at hand, we make known to you that some religious messengers from a certain noble church known to us have come to us, earnestly requesting that the sister whom they seek, who remains with you in a religious habit, be granted to them as their abbess according to their election.

Therefore, by the authority of our office and paternal care, we command and enjoin you to present her to those seeking and desiring her as their leader. If you do this, you will experience our grace from God more than you have until now. Otherwise, we will command you more strongly again and will not cease until you fulfill our orders in this matter.

Letter 10: R10: Hildegard of Rupertsberg to Henry I of Mainz

Response from Hildegard.

The clear fountain that is not deceitful but just says: These reasons concerning the authority over this girl are useless before God, for I am high and deep and encompassing, who am the discerning light that neither constituted nor elected them, but they were made in the company of the audacity of ignorant hearts.

Let all the faithful hear these things with the ears of their hearts, not with ears that hear outwardly like cattle that take in sound but not words. The Spirit of God in His zeal says: O pastors, weep and mourn at this time because you do not know what you are doing. When you disperse offices established in God into faculties of money and into the foolishness of perverse men who do not have the fear of God, where even your cursed, malicious, and threatening words are not to be heard. The rods of your pride are not stretched out in God but in the penalties of presumptuous and wicked will.

But He who is, says to you, O man, listen you who neglect Me in many scrutinies. The heaven of the Lord's vengeance is open, and now ropes are let down among the enemies. But you rise up because your days are short, and remember that Nebuchadnezzar fell and that his crown perished. And many others fell who rashly exalted themselves to heaven. Oh, you ash, why do you not blush to scatter yourself on high when you ought to be in decay?

Now let the rabid ones be ashamed. But you rise and leave the curse behind by fleeing from it.

Letter 11: R11: Arnold von Selenhofen to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Arnold, Archbishop of St. Hildegard. Arnold, by the grace of God, Archbishop of Mainz. Hildegard, virgin dedicated to God and teacher on the Mount of the blessed confessor Robert, his grace to you with fatherly affection. We know that the Spirit blows where it wills and inspires whom it wills, distributing to each his gifts as he wills. This we say without hesitation about you. For what wonder is it if He teaches you by His inspiration, who once appointed farmers and sycamore gatherers as prophets, and made a donkey bear human words? Therefore, we ought not to reject the gifts of God, nor can we. We ask, however, for your affection, that you may assist us with your prayers to the Lord, so that our days may at least be in the fear and love of our Creator, that we may, thus perfected in good things, deserve to have life in the length of days of perpetual happiness.

Letter 12: R12: Hildegard of Rupertsberg to Arnold of Seelenhofen

Hildegard. Oh father! The living light has given these words to me for you. Why do you hide your face from God, as if in a disturbance of your irate mind? For I do not bear mystical words, but according to what I see in the living light, often those things which my mind does not desire and which even my will does not seek are shown to me; but I often see them compelled.

However, I ask God that His help to you may not be as if in exile, and that your soul may be devoted in pure knowledge, looking into the mirror of salvation, so that you may live eternally. May the splendid light of the grace of God never be cut off from you, but may the mercy of God protect you, so that the ancient deceiver may not ensnare you. Now, let your eye live in God, and let the greenness of your soul not wither. The living light says to you, "Why are you not strong in my fear? And why do you have zeal as if you were sifting wheat, so that you may overthrow what is contrary to you by overcoming it? But I do not wish this. Wipe away the restless mind from the eye of your heart, and cut off injustice from yourself and from your people, for the time of wars among the morals of men is now at hand, so that they are neither in discipline nor in the strictness of the fear of the Lord. Yet do not fear to coerce them to good, for if you sustain tribulation and anguish because of this, do not be afraid, for the Son of God suffered the same. Therefore, rise to God, for your time will come soon.

Letter 13: R13: Christian I of Buch to Hildegard of Rupertsberg

Christian, Archbishop. Hildegard. Christian, by the grace of God, Archbishop of Mainz. To Hildegard, beloved teacher of the sisters of St. Robert in Bingen, his devotion, both with fatherly and filial affection. Occupied with many affairs, we write to you briefly, yet with an expanded heart, we earnestly long for your pious love with all the effort of our mind. And because we recognize that you are inspired by the divine spirit, we desire your exhortatory words, for while we outwardly strive to serve the earthly kingdom, we often neglect the heavenly King inwardly. Therefore, we commit ourselves to your prayers and those of the sisters who are with you, so that, aided by them, we may be mercifully delivered by God from the storms and dangers of this world in which we are greatly wearied. We, however, assure you that we are ready to assist you in all your needs and to benefit you in all things as God grants.

Letter 14: R14: Hildegard of Rupertsberg to Christian I of Buch

Response of Hildegard. The mystical vision says to you, "O you, the person of preeminence, in the place of Christ you are appointed by Him, just as all power is from God. But no one is found similar to God. He is the Father of all, for from Him all things proceed and He governs all things. And the priest in the priestly office is because through the pure sacrifice by which man was made, He liberated man. In the oath, the priest is what is written, 'The Lord has sworn and will not repent; you are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.' Indeed, God predestined in Himself to become man without any stain of sin and without any need of penance for amendment and without any mixture and division that are in man with sins, so that He might thus conquer evil as prefigured in Melchizedek.

But you, O man, who are now in the day before the night comes when you can no longer work, strive to teach your people the precepts of God in true authority and govern them in righteous justice as God governs them, and in great diligence, have mercy on them, for God has liberated them through Himself. In this manner, magistracy, dominion, and power are from God. But make friends with the mammon of iniquity through acts of mercy for yourself, so that when you fail, they may receive you into eternal dwellings.

Now, O father and teacher after Christ, listen to the humble form of me writing these things to you from the true light, so that you may extend help to all those in need who seek refuge with you, so that for the joy you provide them, you may be received into the joy of eternal dwellings and live in eternal beatitude, to which God created you, forever."

Letter 15: R15: Hildegard of Rupertsberg to Christian I of Buch

Hildegard to Archbishop Christian.

O most gentle father and lord, who in the place of Jesus Christ is appointed as the pastor over the sheep of the Church, we humbly give thanks to the highest God and to your paternal piety for having mercifully received the letters of our poverty and for having deigned to send letters to our prelates in Mainz on our behalf, who are troubled and distressed. We also thank you for the sweet words of your customary clemency, which through Lord Hermann, the dean of the Church of the Holy Apostles in Cologne, have consoled and gladdened us, so that in all our tribulation and distress we, as daughters, securely flee to you, our beloved father.

Therefore, good lord, we, your servants, who sit in the sadness of tribulation and distress, in the spirit of humility, prostrate at your feet, tearfully open to you the cause of our intolerable pain in pure truth, with the trust that the fiery charity, which is God, inspires in you so that with paternal piety you may mercifully hear the lamentable voice with which we cry out to you in our affliction. O gentle father, when our prelates in Mainz ordered us to remove from our cemetery a young man who had died absolved from the ban and fortified with all the sacraments of the Christian faith before his death, as I had previously indicated to you in my letters, and to cease from divine services, I looked to the true light as I am accustomed, and in that light, God commanded me never to remove voluntarily the one whom He had accepted to be counted among the saved in the embrace of the Church's glory, for great danger would come to us from this, as it would be against His will of truth.

For if the fear of Almighty God had not restrained me, I would have obeyed humbly and would have followed the orders given in your

name, who are our Lord and advocate, to remove the dead man if he had not been excommunicated, preserving the Church's right with grateful willingness. However, after some time, not without great sorrow and sadness, we ceased. In a true vision of my soul, the supreme judge, whose command I did not dare resist, compelled me by the weight of grave infirmity to come to our prelates in Mainz. I presented the words that I had seen in the true light, written as He commanded me, so that in them they might understand what the will of God was in this matter. I also sought forgiveness before those who were present, with bitter tears, pleading mournfully and humbly for mercy. But since their eyes were so blinded that they could not regard me with any mercy, I left them full of tears.

However, many people were moved to pity for us, although they could not help us according to their will. Your faithful friend, the Archbishop of Cologne, came to them in Mainz and, with the assistance of a certain free nobleman, sought to prove with sufficient witnesses that both he and the deceased, while still alive, had been released from the ban in the same place and at the same hour by the same priest. The same priest who had absolved them was also present and confirmed the truth of this matter. That same bishop, presuming upon your permission, obtained the license to celebrate divine services securely and in peace until your return.

But, sweetest lord, having the greatest confidence in your mercy, through those same prelates, we received your letters of interdiction after their return from the Roman synod. I trust that you would never have sent these letters if you had known the truth of this matter. Thus, most gentle father, we are bound by your order in much greater sorrow and distress than before. Therefore, in a vision of my soul, in which I have never been disturbed in any word, I was commanded to say with heart and mouth: It is better for me to fall into the hands of men than to abandon the command of my God.

Therefore, most gentle father, I beseech you in the love of the Holy Spirit, for the sake of the eternal Father's mercy, who sent His Word into the womb of the Virgin in the sweet greenness for the salvation of man, not to despise the tears of your daughters who suffer tribulations and anguish from this unjust binding out of fear of God. May the Holy Spirit inspire you to be so moved with mercy for us that you may also obtain mercy after the end of your life for this.

Letter 16: R16: Christian I of Buch to Hildegard of Rupertsberg

Christian, Archbishop, to Hildegard.

Christian, by the grace of God, Archbishop of Mainz, to the reverend and beloved lady in Christ, Hildegard, and all the brides of Christ serving God with her, may you ascend from virtue to virtue and see the God of gods in Zion. Although we are entirely unworthy and insufficient in the admirable and praiseworthy power of God and the clemency of our Savior, we still pursue Him with gratitude, so that we may be made worthy by your most dear intercession in Christ, beloved lady. We offer thanks to Him from whom every good gift and every perfect gift descends, as from the Father of lights, who has found favor in your soul and has illuminated it with His true and inestimable light. By His preceding and following grace, it has been granted to your holy devotion, like Mary, to sit at the feet of the Lord and to be occupied with visions of the heavenly Jerusalem.

These are clear signs of your holy way of life and astonishing testimonies of the truth. Thus, our soul, most dear lady in Christ, is bound and held by your commands, or rather prayers, so that whatever we know may be added to your holy wishes, we ought rightly to incline the intention of our heart, hoping and having the highest confidence in your holiness after God. We hope to receive the grace of God through the most holy fragrance of your prayers, preceding and following, and that this sinful soul of ours may find mercy from its Creator, thanks to your holy intervention.

Hence, we sympathize with you as deeply as possible in the tribulation and affliction that you and your holy convent endure from the suspension of divine services, as we can clearly see our own innocence in this matter. However, since it was established that the deceased buried in your church had incurred a sentence of

excommunication during his life, and since the church was uncertain about his absolution, it was too perilous for us, due to the statutes of the holy fathers which must not be avoided, to disregard the clamor of the clergy and the scandal of the church, until it could be proven by suitable testimony from good men in the face of the church that he had indeed been absolved. Therefore, as is fitting, we have written back to the Church of Mainz from the depths of our hearts, sympathizing with your affliction, that if it is shown by the true assertion of good men that the aforementioned deceased was absolved, we command that divine services be celebrated for you.

We also beg and humbly supplicate your holiness, if through our fault or ignorance we have troubled you in this matter, not to withhold your mercy in granting our petition for pardon, and to deign to intercede with the Father of mercies on our behalf, so that we may be presented safe and sound before your holy sight and the Church of Mainz, to the honor of God and your church, and for the salvation of our soul. May the Lord preserve you in health and holiness.

Letter 17: R17: Hartwig I of Bremen to Hildegard of Rupertsberg

Hertwig, Archbishop of Bremen, to Hildegard.

To Hildegard, teacher at St. Robert, in Christ. Hertwig, Archbishop of Bremen, and brother of Abbess Richardis, offering what is due in place of a sister and more than a sister's obedience. I inform you that our sister, my sister in body but yours in soul, has departed on the path of all flesh, and that the honor I had conferred upon her, she weighed lightly, preferring to obey her Lord, the King of Heaven, over an earthly king. She made a holy and pious confession, was anointed with holy oil after her confession, lived fully in Christian faith, and desired your convent with all her heart, tearfully yearning for it.

She entrusted herself to the Lord through my mother and John, and, signing herself three times with the sign of the cross, confessed the Trinity and Unity, in perfect faith, hope, and charity towards God. We are certain of this. She died on the third day before the Kalends of November. Therefore, I ask you, if I am worthy, as much as I can, to love her as much as she loved you, and if she seemed to have failed in any way, it was not from her but from me. At least consider her tears shed because of her departure from your convent, which many are witnesses to. And had death not prevented her, she would scarcely have obtained leave to come to you! And since death detained her, know that I will come on her behalf if it pleases God.

But God, who is the rewarder of all good things, from the good deeds she showed towards you, among all and above all, both relatives and friends, for which there is gratitude to God and to me, may He reward you here and in the future for all your will. Give thanks to your sisters for all their benefactions.

Letter 18: R18: Hildegard of Rupertsberg to Hartwig I of Bremen

Hildegard's Response.

He who saw you at the beginning and gave you eyes to see with the flying wings of all creation, and who made man a mirror in the fullness of all His miracles so that the knowledge of God shines in him as it is written, "You are gods and all of you are children of the Most High" — may He look upon you and guide you according to His will. Man touches God, who has neither beginning nor end, where rationality in man imitates God, and knowledge of good and evil reveals God. Thus is the wheel of eternity.

May God also make you flee from that evil which began on the first day and lacks good will, and which always contradicts God. May He also make windows in you that shine in the heavenly Jerusalem, which are beautiful buildings in virtues, and may He make you fly in the embraces of God's love. As He who was filled with God said, "Who are these who fly like clouds and like doves to their windows?" And again, "I, a humble form, saw the light of salvation in you."

Now fulfill the commandments of God that His grace gives you and what the Holy Spirit teaches you. But also, in the spirit of mystical gift, I say to you: You are a praiseworthy person who is necessary to mankind, having in the highest God the succession, which is the pontifical office! Therefore, may your eye see God, may your mind understand His justice, and may your heart burn with the love of God so that your soul does not fail! But stand in the highest zeal to build the tower of the heavenly Jerusalem, and may God give you a helper, that is, the most sweet mother mercy.

Be also a shining star illuminating the darkness of the nights of wicked men, and a swift deer running to the fountain of living water.

Consider that in this time many shepherds are blind, greedy, and money-grabbing, suffocating the justice of God! But God, who knows all things, knows where pastoral care is useful. Therefore, a faithful man should not wander seeking preeminence. If he seeks it with a restless mind, he is seeking power more for pleasure than for God's will, being a ravenous wolf in his person, and his soul never seeks spiritual things; instead, it is filled with simony.

Therefore, I say to you in spirit: Oh, how great a miracle it is in the salvation of the souls of those men who are without simony in their station! God looks upon them in such a way that His glory is not overshadowed in them but acts in them like a mighty warrior who strives not to be overcome by anyone, so that his victory may be stable.

Now listen. This was done in my daughter Richardis, whom I call my daughter because perfect love was in my soul for her, as the living light in the strongest vision taught me to love her. Listen. God held her in such zeal that the pleasures of the world could not embrace her, but fought against her, even though she appeared like a flower in beauty and decorum in the symphony of this world. But while she was still alive in the body, I heard in a true vision about her: "O virginity! You stand in the royal chamber." She had a fellowship in the holy order with the virginal branch, wherefore the daughters of Zion rejoice.

But the ancient serpent wanted to draw her away from blessed honor through the high nobility of humanity! Yet the supreme judge drew this daughter of mine to Himself, cutting off all human glory from her. Therefore, my soul has great confidence in her, although the world loved her beautiful form and prudence while she lived in the body. But God loved her more. Therefore, God did not want to give His friend to an enemy lover, that is, the world!

Now you, dear one, sitting in the place of Christ, fulfill the will of your sister's soul which the necessity of obedience demands. And as she was always solicitous for you, so now be for her soul! And do good works according to her zeal. Therefore, I cast away from my heart that sorrow you caused me in this my daughter. May God grant you through the intercession of the saints the dew of His grace and blessed remuneration in the future world.

Letter 19: R19: Arnold II of Wied to Hildegard of Rupertsberg

Arnold, by the grace of God, Archbishop of Cologne.

To Hildegard, the shining lamp in the house of the Lord from the Mount of St. Robert, residing under the protection of the God of Heaven. If you are well and all things around you are directed to the Lord, we rejoice! By your merits, we too are well. For although we have long intended to come to you, we have been unable. As much as we can at present, we commit ourselves to you, place our hands in yours, and join our faith with your faith! We commend ourselves entirely to you.

Furthermore, regarding the book you wrote inspired by the divine spirit, without any delay, because we neither wish nor can do without it, do not hesitate to send it to us through the bearer of these letters, whether it is ready or not. We do not wish to tempt God but desire to see His wonders.

Letter 20: R20: Hildegard of Rupertsberg to Arnold II of Wied

Hildegard's Response

In a true vision, I saw this. Listen, then. I saw a man standing in the valley of a certain mountain, who has a choice in the taste of his soul. This same man sends the choice he has to the height of the same mountain, and the air of that mountain receives it, so that it takes on a fiery color, like oil ignited by fire. But birds of the world, separated from the unclean, come and take that air into their wings and thus become swift in their flight. The most noble master of the house, seeing this, says, "From where do you come?" They respond, "A certain stranger standing in the valley of the mountain sent a very sweet wind to us in its height, and we became swift to fly to you." And the same master of the house says to them, "Although this man stands far from me, yet because of the course by which you came to me, I want to love him." But let whoever wishes to be vigilant perceive this understanding. God often makes lambs out of wolves because of the prayers of the saints, just as He also makes the just out of publicans. And He who knows all things says, "See that you do not love God in the caves of robbers, and do not name Him in vanities, so that you only invoke God in words and not in deeds. Whoever speaks to me in word, I will respond to; but whoever speaks to me in proverbs, I am alien to him. For I erase contumacy and crush the contradiction of those who despise me by myself. Woe, woe to the evil of the iniquitous who despise me." Hear this, O man, if you wish to live! Otherwise, my sword will strike you. Now, O shepherd of your people, I, a humble woman, have sent you the writings of these true visions, as you requested, containing nothing of human ingenuity and my own will, but what the unfailing light wished to reveal in its composition and in those words as it pleased

Him, with neither my own ingenuity nor any human judgment, but composed by a heavenly revelation.

Letter 21: R21: Eberhard of Biburg to Hildegard of Rupertsberg

Archbishop of Utrecht to Hildegard.

The minister and Archbishop of the Church of Utrecht by the grace of God, although unworthy, sends greetings to Hildegard, sister and teacher at St. Rupert in Bingen. May the prayer of a sinner avail anything, and after the triumph of this flesh, may you enter into the embrace of the heavenly Bridegroom with the wise virgins.

I, a sinner placed in the valley of tears, worn out by many storms and tempests of the world, having experienced fears within and fights without, earnestly request your loving intercession to deign to pour out prayers for me, so that the divine mercy may open the bowels of His compassion upon me and mercifully deliver me from all tribulations. For even the Emperor, because of the schism that is now in the Church, tries to force his power upon us.

Your charity, a virgin worthy of God, should remember that when I was at Mainz in the court of the same Emperor, I earnestly commended myself to your holy prayers, so that through your intercession, my life's condition might have progress in the Lord and a happy consummation. And you promised my lowliness that upon receiving my letters, according to what the Lord would deign to reveal to you, you would not hesitate to write back to me. The debt of this promise my lowliness requests from your holiness.

Farewell, virgin of God, and remember me. Whatever it is that you write back, please place it under seal.

Letter 22: R22: Hildegard of Rupertsberg to Eberhard of Biburg

Hildegard's Response

O you who stand in the place of the living Son of God, I now see your state as two walls joined by a cornerstone: one wall like a shining cloud, the other somewhat shadowed, yet the brightness does not mix with the shadow, nor does the shadow mix with the brightness. These walls represent your labors, joined in your soul, where on one side, your intention and sighs reach out to God in brightness through a narrow path, and on the other, the circuit of your labor extends somewhat in shadow to the people subject to you. However, you hold the brightness of your intention as a domestic thing and the shadow of worldly labors as something foreign, not allowing them to intermingle. Therefore, you often feel fatigue in your soul, for your intention towards God and your labor for the people are not as one. But when you breathe towards heavenly things with good intention and care for the people in God, they can be united in one reward, just as Christ remained in the heavenly places and yet inclined towards the people, as it is written, "You are gods, and all of you are children of the Most High."

You are gods in the heavenly realms and children of the Most High in the care of the people. Therefore, O father, divide your labors at the fountain of wisdom, which two daughters have drawn from, being clothed in royal garments, namely charity and obedience. For wisdom has arranged all things with charity, drawing out many streams, as it is said, "I alone have compassed the circuit of heaven." And because God gave man the command through obedience, the garment of charity is what looks upon the face of God in the angelic order, but the garment of obedience is the girding of the humanity of the Lord.

These girls knock at your door, and charity says to you, "I desire to stay with you, and I want you to place me in the bed of your love and have me in diligent friendship. For when you touch and cleanse wounds with mercy, I lie in your bed, and when you hold the simple and those who live well with benevolence in God, I am in your diligent friendship." And obedience says to you, "I stay with you for the binding of the law and the commandments of God. Therefore, hold me firmly and bravely, not as a steward, but as a dearest friend. For you received me at the beginning of baptism, and you have held me in some progression of your life, namely in the discipline of subjection and in preeminence where you obeyed the commandments of God. Charity is my material, and I am born from it."

Oh father! Wisdom says to you again, "Be like the father of a family who gently hears the foolishness of his children and yet does not abandon his prudence, as I also unite heavenly and earthly things for the benefit of the people. Therefore, touch and cleanse wounds, and hold the simple and those who live well, and have joy in both parts with God's help."

Now, O father, I, a humble form, see that your will desires the door of virtues that will come to you, so that in these virtues you will complete the mill of your body's end. He who is and who searches all things holds your soul and body in His salvation.

Letter 23: R23: Hillin von Fallemanien to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Hillin, Archbishop of Trier. Hildegard.

Hillin, by the grace of God, humble minister and servant of the people of Trier, and their unworthy Archbishop, to Hildegard, my dearest sister, following the Lamb and Bridegroom wherever he goes. For the wisdom of God, which chooses the weak things of the world to confound the strong, has found a delightful dwelling in your virginity. He has poured out the grace of His light upon you more abundantly in the spirit of counsel and knowledge. Through the effusion of this light, as I believe, He wishes even the minds of others to be stirred towards better studies and closer to salvation, and to be illuminated, through you, venerable mother, embraced with the sincerest love.

Therefore, dearest virgin of Christ, truly a vine under whose shadow you rest, whose fruit is sweet and embracing to your throat. Truly, may the branches of this vine extend more widely in this stormy sea, may the sweetness of the heavenly cup with which you are inebriated be directed towards the profit of souls everywhere, freely given as you have freely received. Otherwise, you may be accused of wanting to hide the lamp kindled for the benefit of others under a bushel. I therefore ask, holy mother, together with those who flee to the harbor of your consolation, full of hope for the fulfillment of my desire, I ask and implore you by your maternal love, through the holy charity, that from that wine cellar of the King, whose abundance of pleasure even here in this life you wonderfully enjoy, you may deign to send some drops to me, a sinner, through the bearer of this letter.

May you do this both for the sake of Him who granted you this power and so that the truth of your experience may be proven,

because some doubtfully hear rumors about the grace infused in you from heaven. May He who began this good work in you complete it in the land of the living.

Letter 24: R24: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Hillin von Fallemanien

Hildegard's response.

Wisdom speaks, saying: Now is the time of the squalid state of female form. Oh, oh, Adam, the new testament of all justice! And the root of all the seed of men. Later, in that kind, the spirit of man arose, which went out in three troops, like a tree extending into three branches. The first troop was such that the sons of Adam chose whatever their ability could manage. The second, that men rose up in the rashness of murder. The third, that they did whatever they wanted in idols and similar errors. Now this tree is dry, and the world is overturned in many dangers. For this time looks back to that time when the first woman deceived the first man with a nod. But the man, however, has more strength to accomplish than the woman. The woman, however, is the fountain of wisdom and the source of full joy, which parts the man brings to perfection.

Hey, hey, this time is neither cold nor hot but squalid. After this, a time will come when, in great dangers, in fear, injustice, and ferocity of men, the manly strength will suffer. Your error, the error of the erring, will blow like four winds that spread their fame in great dangers. Now, however, oh pastor, listen, for the grace of God did not establish you in vain; therefore, contain his justice. When you begin to do good works, you quickly become tired; but when you are called to a symphony, so that you stand in prayer, you immediately wither. Hey, hey, you who are in the place of Christ, listen again. Once a king lived in a city in great honor, which he entrusted to three men of his people, so that they would keep its care. To the first, he entrusted the tower; to the second, the plain of the city; to the third, the wall itself with the bulwarks. So, the people in the plain of the city are placed under you; your clergy, however, are on the wall with the bulwarks. If the city wall is attacked and the plain

plundered, you still keep the tower, and be such that the whole city is not destroyed and dissipated.

The form of the dove teaches you, and the word of God does not lack knowledge in you. Now, therefore, be vigilant and bind with an iron rod, teach, and heal the wounds of those entrusted to you, and you will live forever.

Letter 25: R25: Eberhard II of Otelingen to Hildegard of Rupertsberg

Eberhard, Bishop of Bamberg, to Hildegard.

Eberhard, by the grace of God, unworthy bishop of the church of Bamberg, to Hildegard, venerable sister and teacher of Saint Rupert, with devoted affection and the service of eternal beatitude.

With heavenly grace favoring, the proclamation of your holiness sweetly resonates in the ears of people everywhere, so that we can truly say that we are the good fragrance of Christ to God. And since the Lord has looked down from heaven upon the children of men to see if there is any who understands or seeks Him, we, attracted by the fragrance of your good reputation, hasten to the Lord, who is honored and consulted in you.

What you have granted to many, you will not deny to one. For as we were passing from the emperor's court through your region, since you are imbued with the Holy Spirit, we have committed this matter to your charity to be explained. In the Father is eternity, in the Son equality, in the Holy Spirit the connection of eternity and equality. What now, therefore, according to what God has revealed to you, we desire to see explained.

May the Lord be with you, so that we may also be assisted by your prayers.

Letter 26: R26: Hildegard of Rupertsberg to Eberhard II of Otelingen

Hildegard's response.

He who is, and from whom nothing is hidden, says: O pastor, do not wither in the sweet flow of the fragrance of balsam, which is the vitality that must bloom for foolish minds who do not have the breasts of maternal mercy to suckle. Those who lack this will perish. Therefore, provide the lamp of the King to your people, lest they be scattered in harshness! And rise, living in the light.

Well, oh father, I, poor creature, have looked to the true light, and according to what I have seen and heard in true vision, which you have asked me to explain to you, I transmit this explanation not with my words, but with the words of the true light, which is never deficient, as follows:

In the Father remains eternity. This means that to the Father's eternity nothing is to be taken away or added, because eternity remains like the form of a wheel, which neither begins nor ends. Thus, in the Father, there is eternity before all creation, because always and forever there has been eternity. And what is eternity? It is God. But eternity is not eternity unless it is in perfect life. Therefore, God lives in eternity. But life does not proceed from mortality; rather, life is in life. For a tree does not blossom without greenness, nor does a stone exist without moisture, nor does any creature without its power. Even living eternity is not without flourishing. How? The Word of the Father brought all creation into its function. And thus, the Father, in His most powerful force, is not idle. Hence, God is called the Father, because all things are born from Him. And so, in the Father remains eternity, because He was Father before the beginning, and eternal before the inception of His brilliant works, which all appeared in the foreknowledge of eternity.

But that which remains in the Father is not like a cause in a man, which is sometimes doubtful, sometimes past, sometimes future, sometimes new, sometimes old; rather, it is always stable in the Father. The Father is clarity, and that clarity has splendor, and that splendor is fire, and they are one. Whoever does not have this in faith does not see God, because they want to cut off from Him what is, for God is not to be divided. The works also that God has created do not have the full property of their names when man divides them. Clarity is paternity from which all things are born and which encompasses all things because they are from His power. For the same power made man and breathed the breath of life into him. But man also has the effective result of this same power in him. How? Flesh from flesh and goodness from what is good are emitted in good fame and increased in good example in another person. These things are both carnal and spiritual in man, because one proceeds from the other.

Man loves his useful works very much because they are in action from his knowledge; thus, God also wills that His power be shown through all kinds because they are His work. And splendor gives sight, and that splendor is the Son who gave sight when He said, "Let there be." Then all things appeared corporally in the living eye. And fire penetrates these two names, which is God, because it would not be possible for clarity to be without splendor.

And if this fire were absent from them, the clarity would not shine, nor would the splendor gleam. For in the fire, the flame and the light lie hidden; otherwise, it would not be fire. In the Son, there is equality. How? All creatures were in the Father before him, he who arranged them in himself; later, the Son completed them in the work. How? Just as a man who has the knowledge of a great work in himself, which he then brings forth in his word so that it proceeds with good repute. The Father arranges, but the Son executes the work.

For the Father arranged all things in Himself, and the Son completed them in the work. And light is from light, before Him in eternity, which was in the beginning; and this is the Son, who shines from the Father and through whom all creatures were made. The Son also put on the tunic of man, whom He formed from clay, which did not appear corporally before. Thus, God saw all His works before Him as light, and when He said, "Let there be," He put a tunic on each one according to its kind. Then God inclined Himself to His work, and thus in this part, equality remains in man in the Son of God, for He put on humanity, just as the works of God put on their bodies.

God foresaw all His works which He accomplished, whence He inclined to man in the humility of humanity, because divinity is so perfect that it would not spare anything in man that fights against good unless it had put on humanity, for all things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made. All visible, tangible, and tasteable things were made through Him, and He foresaw all these in some necessity for man: some for the embrace of charity, some for fear, some for discipline, some for caution in every cause. And without Him nothing was made. This "nothing" is pride.

That opinion, which looks to itself and trusts in nothing, wants what God does not want and always considers what it establishes, and it is dark because it despised the light of truth and began what it could not finish. Thus, it is nothing because it was neither made nor created by God. It began in the first angel when he looked at his own splendor and formed an opinion and did not see from whom he had that same splendor. But he said to himself, "I want to be the lord!" and wanted no other. Thus, his glory vanished from him and he lost it, becoming the prince of darkness. Then God gave his glory to another, His Son, who was made in such strong power that all creatures are subject to Him and who is established in such strong power that He does not lose that glory through anything.

In that same malediction, where the devil did not want God, foolishness in man desired to be like God, namely, to be God. Yet he did not lose that love which he knew to be God. Hence, the substance of the devil is entirely dark because he did not want the clarity of God. But Adam wanted the clarity of God but desired to be in His companionship. Thus, he is perfect in his substance because there is something luminous in him, yet he is full of many miseries.

In the Holy Spirit is the connection of eternity and equality. The Holy Spirit is fiery and an inextinguishable fire, sometimes appearing through its flame, sometimes being extinguished. The Holy Spirit infuses and connects eternity and equality, so that they are one as a man binds a bundle; for if the bundle were not bound, it would not be a bundle but scattered. Just as a smith joins two powers of brass with fire into one, it is like a versatile sword that vibrates everywhere. The Holy Spirit shows eternity, ignites equality so that they are one. The Holy Spirit is the fire and life in this eternity and equality because God lives.

The sun is bright, and its light blazes and fire burns in it, illuminating the whole world, and it is a single wheel apparatus. But any cause in which there is no power is dead, just as cut wood from a tree is dry because it lacks greenness. The Holy Spirit is the solid foundation and vivification. For eternity would not be eternity without the Holy Spirit. Equality also would not be equality without the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit is in both, and in the divinity, one God. Rationality also has three powers: sound, word, breath. In the Father, the Son is as a city in sound; the Holy Spirit is in both as breath in sound and word. And these three persons, as stated before, are one God.

In the Father is eternity because no one is before Him! And eternity did not begin, as the works of God have a beginning. But in the Son is equality because the Son never departed from the Father, nor did

the Father lack the Son. But in the Holy Spirit is the connection, for the Son always remained in the Father and the Father with the Son, because the Holy Spirit is the fiery life in them and they are one. And it is written, "The Spirit of the Lord has filled the world." This means that all creatures that are seen and those that are not seen do not lack spiritual life, and those that man does not recognize, his intellect seeks until he recognizes them.

For from greenness come flowers; from flowers come the fruits of trees. The cloud also has its course, the moon and the stars too blaze with fire. Trees bring forth flowers through their greenness, water through its thinness and by overflowing and producing streams. The earth also has moisture with sweat. For all creatures have what is seen and what is not seen. What is seen is weak, and what is not seen is strong and vital. This the intellect of man seeks to understand, for it does not see it. These are the powers of the works of the Holy Spirit. And this is what contains all things. What is this? Man contains all things. How? By ruling, using, commanding. This God has granted him according to Himself. He has the knowledge of voice. This is rationality, which sounds with voice. The voice is the body, rationality is the soul, the heat of the air is fire, and they are one. Therefore, when rationality is heard dictating and creating through voice, all its works are completed, and through this, it is present to create, for as it commands, so it will be.

Therefore, all the works of God are not in vain. For if someone had a vessel full of money, he would hold great joy from it. But if there were nothing in the vessel, he would consider it worthless. In evil works, there is emptiness, and they flee from the fire of the Holy Spirit. Then there is the delight of sinning from the suggestion of the devil. But when a man recognizes that his evil works are considered nothing and yet he makes a turn back from sin, he is like the prodigal son who, after his hunger, remembered the bread of his father and said, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before

you!" against heaven because he is rationally celestial, and before you because he knows you are God. Then he rejects the devil and again chooses his Lord. Hence, all the vices of the devil are confounded, and all the heavenly harmonies marvel because what they previously considered useless clay, they later see as the chief pillar of a cloud because what they saw as vile, they later choose as more beautiful, for all the vices of the devil are considered nothing in utility.

In those evil works, there is no utility, but they make utility in good works. These are the works of the Holy Spirit. Now, O pastor and father of the people, may God grant you to reach that light where you may receive the knowledge of true blessedness.

Letter 27: R27: Günther von Henneberg to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Bishop of Speyer to Hildegard

Gundarus, by the grace of God, minister and bishop of the church of Speyer, to Hildegard, teacher of the monastery of St. Rupert in Bingen, eternal salvation in Christ.

We give thanks to divine mercy that you are a good fragrance both to those far and near, and that you provide solace from the Holy Spirit to all who seek you. Therefore, you should be certain, dear one, that we view the honor and benefit of your church with a willing spirit, and in every way that we can support the advancement of that same church, we will gladly do so.

We earnestly ask your holiness, for the sake of our love for God, to intercede for us and make Him favorable to us with your prayers. And know without any doubt that if God grants us life, you will not lack honorable remuneration. For it is just that you extend to us the help of your prayers, just as we are concerned for your needs. We also desire to receive your written replies.

Letter 28: R28: Hildegard of Rupertsberg to Günther of Henneberg

Hildegard

Light of supreme inspiration! O human, it says to you: Do not cut off the admonition of the Holy Spirit, which ascends in you, through the evil habit of your works! For God seeks in you what He once attended to in bringing back the lost sheep when He wiped away the crimes of men. And the ancient deceiver was confounded when the strongest warrior overcame him. God looks at you through the windows, for He is kind and merciful. Let no man deride this through any opinion of his will.

Listen. Do not cut off this cause of God's admonition from you, lest God strike you with His scourges, for in His zeal He wishes to overthrow this inimical cause because His companions mock Him through their associates in His display. Hence, He vibrates the bow of His admonition, showing that no one can resist Him. Therefore, you, man, who are enveloped in much darkness, rise quickly after your fall and build in the heavenly places! Let the dark and filthy be ashamed in your exaltation when you rise from your darkness, for your soul barely lives because of your works. For you look as if through a figure to another life, which intention shines in you like the dawn of light. Your mind sifts and shakes itself in great torments, where your abundant nature afflicts you with twisted desires. Avoid this moisture.

Listen, human. A man inhabits a land that shows great power in itself when the plow turns it over, so that it brings forth much germination and fruit from the seeds sown in it. Then it pleased this man to make a garden of spices in that land, and in it grew spices of the sweetest fragrance for the healing of wounds and scars. And that land was made better than it had been before. Now you, human,

choose what is more useful to you in these two parts. For the foundation of the heavenly Jerusalem was first laid with those stones that were wounded in great falls and polluted with the scars of vices, who afterward overcame their crimes in penance.

The creator of the world first laid this foundation with rough and unpolished stones. And these stones sustain the whole city of God. Therefore, flee the lasciviousness of this world in the shipwreck of impurity, and be like the sardius and the topaz, and swift like a deer to drink from the purest fountain with your tongue, and you will live forever.

Letter 29: R29: Conrad I of Worms to Hildegard of Rupertsberg

Bishop of Worms to Hildegard

Conrad, by the grace of God, though unworthy, bishop of the church of Worms, to Hildegard, beloved sister of the monastery of Saint Rupert, with a humble offering of prayers and sweet devotion in all obedience.

We give thanks to God who has placed you, the brightest lamp, on a golden candlestick and has made the brightness of His light shine far and wide through you in His house. Therefore, dearest sister and daughter, we earnestly pray that you dispel the clouds of our minds, which oppress us through the incongruous whirlwind of tribulations and the inundation of various thoughts, with the rays by which we believe the sun of justice illuminates you without doubt.

Indeed, we would have many things to express to your holiness if the prolixity of words did not hinder us from explaining them to you! However, we speak to you presently with a living voice through the bearer of this letter and earnestly request a response to your admonition with all our heart.

Letter 30: R30: Hildegard of Rupertsberg to Conrad I of Worms

Response from Hildegard.

You are a person seated on the chair of Christ, and you hold an iron rod in your hand to guide His sheep. Look to the sun of justice and to the many stars, which are the virtues, so that you do not lack the food of life, for a good shepherd always flourishes in good works and feeds his sheep in true greenness. May He grant this to you who resounded on the first day, and in whose word all creation proceeded, and who will sound the trumpet on the last day, so that He will awaken all the children of men.

For some men, living justly, are the tabernacle of God, because God dwells in them. Man is indeed the building of God in which He Himself has a dwelling, for He has sent a fiery soul into him, which flies with rationality in expansion, just as a wall encompasses the width of a house. And those who are justified in their works according to the precepts of God, not neglecting the law of God, build the heavenly Jerusalem. But those who work according to the flesh and not according to the spirit will fall from the holy edification.

Whoever cuts off the ownership of his own will from himself adorns the heavenly building with pearls, precious stones, and the finest gold. Therefore, make yourself such that you may become a precious stone and be adorned in the highest Jerusalem.

Letter 31: R31: R31: Hermann von Arbon to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Bishop of Constance to Hildegard.

The bishop of the church of Constance, by the grace of God, though unworthy and useless, to Hildegard, bride of Christ, of the monastery of Saint Rupert in Bingen, with an increase of sincere love and the most blessed course of both lives. The fame of your wisdom, spread far and wide, has been reported to me by some truthful people, which has called me to the desire to seek your solace and support from distant parts and to commend myself to your prayers. For it is difficult for one who does not know how to govern his own life to become a judge of another's life.

Therefore, with sincere devotion, I earnestly ask for your love to assist me with your prayers before God and to strengthen me with your reply. For both my own will and earthly cares in almost every way draw me away from the service of God.

Letter 32: R32: Hildegard of Rupertsberg to Hermann of Arbon

Response from Hildegard

The most just light says: O man, reproach your mind, which pierces through the counsel of ancient prelates, whom the windy mind of vanities did not touch. What is your estimation, you who do not blush to walk in darkness through the taste of your own work? For the revelation of Him to whom nothing is hidden shows through the living eye that the bow of God's zeal threatens the recklessness of men. Why do you not see where the deceitful mammon lies, in which you find excuses?

Many laborers come in their causes and seek the narrow and tight way, but you move your lips through the grandiose breaths of the ways of your heart and lead them to indignation. Hence, direct yourself from darkness into straight paths, and illuminate the sense of your heart, lest the Father of all should say to you, "Why do you ascend the column through foolishness, which you did not make?"

For the day darkens for him who does not work in the ways of the right path, which you should beware of. Therefore, rise quickly and walk the straight paths before the sun sets for you and before your days fail.

Letter 33: R33: Adalbert III of Chiny to Hildegard of Rupertsberg

Bishop of Verdun Hildegard.

Adelbertus, by the grace of God, servant and bishop of the church of Verdun, although unworthy. To Hildegard, my most beloved mother from the Mount of Saint Robert, delighting in the present and eternal visions of God. Blessed be the glory of the Lord from His holy place! Who has made you His servant from your tender years.

But I, as if a blind man would show the way to one who sees. I suggest to your charity that you recognize this grace with humility. By attending to that prophecy of the ancient Balaam! Who, although he directed his final words against the people of God, it is still memorable in his vision when he said, "He falls, and thus his eyes are opened!" Surely signifying humility in vision. The teacher of the nations also said, "lest the greatness of the revelations should exalt me," and so forth. Therefore, let these things be said more out of the confidence of my affection towards you than from the presumption of doctrine. Moreover, know that I cannot come to you at present, although I am near you. Yet in my adversities, I seek you as a faithful patroness in your prayers! And I ask to be aided by the intercessions of your sisters, the servants of God in your convent. It has been a long time since I deserved to have your writing! I now at least pray to deserve it.

Letter 34: R34: Hildegard of Rupertsberg to Adalbert III of Chiny

Response of Hildegard.

The living light which shows miracles! says: You who are a father in your person and a shepherd in the placement of souls! Extend your arm lest the enemy man oversow tares in your field. Therefore, take care of that garden which the divine gift has planted. And beware that its spices are not dry! but remove the rot, cut it off, and cast it outside, which suffocates the usefulness of those things. And thus make it flourish. For when the sun hides its rays, the world also withdraws its joy. And I say, do not obscure your garden in the tedium of silence! but in true light with discretion correct those things which need correction. Also illuminate your temple with benevolence. And in your censer, light the fire, placing myrrh so that its smoke may ascend to the palace of the living God. And you will live forever.

Letter 35: R35: Rudolf of Zähringen to Hildegard of Rupertsberg

Bishop of Liège. To Hildegard.

Rudolf, by the grace of God, bishop of the people of Liège! To Hildegard, servant of Christ from Saint Rupert's in Bingen. Serve the King of Kings unceasingly, and lay hold of the reward of eternal blessedness. Placed in great turmoil of mind and body, I have decided to write to you, because I am in great need of God's mercy! Which I do not deny to have offended and angered by my countless sins. Therefore, dearest sister, knowing truly that God is with you! I advise and beg, by the mercy of His holiness, that you extend your hand to me who am troubled and fleeing to you for refuge. For let it be your care to remove from me through devoted prayers what is caused by my negligence! And whatever is shown to you by the unfailing and living light, write back to me to awaken my slumber. May the most merciful God grant that through your writings I may receive the most certain consolation through you! And that by the merit of your intercession, I may obtain at least the final abode of eternal rest.

Letter 36: R36: Hildegard of Rupertsberg to Rudolf of Zähringen

Hildegard.

The living light says. The paths of the scriptures of life lead to the high mountain, where flowers and most precious spices grow, and where the sweetest wind flies, making a strong fragrance among them. And where roses and lilies show splendid faces. This same mountain had long not appeared because of the shadows of the blind living air! For even the Son of the Most High had not yet enlightened the world. Then the sun came from the dawn, illuminating this mountain! And all the people saw its spices. And the day became very adorned! And a sweet sound arose. O shepherds, now there is weeping and mourning, because in your time this mountain is covered with the blackest clouds! so that its good scent does not exude. But you be a good shepherd! and noble in morals. And as an eagle looks at the sun, so remember and look where you can call back the lazy and the wanderers to the homeland, and bring some light to this mountain so that your soul may live! and so that you may hear that most loving voice from the supreme judge, "Well done, good and faithful servant." and that your soul in this part may shine, as a soldier glows in battle when his companions rejoice with him! because he has been victorious. Therefore, you, leader of the people, fight in good victory! and thus correct the wanderers, and wash the beautiful pearls from decay, preparing them for the supreme king. And so let your mind continually yearn in good zeal to bring these pearls back to this mountain! as the gift of God has established them. May God protect you! and free your soul from eternal punishment.

Letter 37: R37: Gottfried von Rhenen to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Bishop of Utrecht. To Hildegard.

Godefridus, by divine favor, bishop of Utrecht! To his unique, singular, special sister Hildegard, mistress of the sisters of Saint Rupert! Greetings from Him who commands salvation in Jacob. Dearest sister, since I first began to love you in the charity of Christ, never has the memory of you, sweeter to me than honey and honeycomb, been able to fade from my mind. For the virtue of God, which dwells in you, which works through you, which makes you familiar with that Spouse who eternally saves all who hope in Him, compels me to your love. And since charity is diffused in your heart, I ask you in the charity which abounds in you towards all, that with all diligence and every effort, you study to pray to God for me, so that in this world I may deserve to be relieved of the burdens of my sins. May the Lord lead you there where there is happy eternity and eternal happiness, joyful tranquility, joy without end. As one thirsts for the fountain, so do I desire your response.

Letter 38: R38: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Gottfried von Rhenen

Response from Hildegard.

O you, taken and called by God, to follow Him in your works by imitating Him! Since God builds, rules, and anoints all things. For Almighty God created the world through His word, which He also governs, and He sanctifies all things through water, washing away the sins of men. God created all creatures and governs them, and He endowed man with them, just as a craftsman makes his vessels through the elegance of fire. But then the bright day declined into dark night through the disobedience of Adam in the fall! And because of this, men lived in sins and forgetfulness as if God did not exist. Then God cleansed the whole earth of the criminal sins of men through the waters of the flood. And thus the saints and the law and the prophets arose. Finally, the Son of God came, who did not deserve to be present in an empty time where He would find no justice, just as man was not created until all creation showed him. But the Son of God also came to redeem the whole world through obedience, through the anointing of baptism, and through penance. Now you, shepherd, take care not to be in a childish time that does not know God, but be in the time of the just and the saints and in the manifestation of the prophets, grasping justice in your works, just as God foresaw all things before they were accomplished, and rule your people according to Him. You also provide assistance to the people in place of Christ, do not be like a sounding trumpet that does not work, but be a good scent of virtues so that you may live forever. Etc. "I will exalt you, my God, the King! and I will bless your name forever and ever." For when you understand that you are in the episcopal chair, praise God in all your ways, exalt Him in good works, and continually ruminate His precepts to the people without weariness! Kiss Him in faith, and embrace Him in good works. In

good conduct also acknowledge your God, and magnify Him as the just king in His judgments, so that you may rightly rule your people, and anoint them with mercy. And do not drag harmful crime after you, that is, do not accept a gift through injustice! and so invoke His name, so that in all these things you may have fear of Him because He is king! and do this in all the steps of your life as long as you live in this world, so that afterward in the infinite world you may live forever.

Letter 39: R39: Bf. H. from Prague to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Bishop of Braga. To Hildegard.

H., by the grace of God, unworthy servant and bishop of Braga, to Hildegard, bride of Christ and mistress of Saint Rupert in Bingen. Offering whatever little gift of his prayers with all devotion. We magnify and glorify the Lord our God, by whose Spirit you are illuminated, consoling and relieving many in their tribulations, and multiplying the fruit of good works in many minds through the cooperation of the same Spirit! As we have also heard of you from many lands. Therefore, let your holiness know that we greatly desire to see you and to enjoy your company in Christ! But great difficulties of location hinder this. And since we have perceived that your charity has come to the aid of the needs of many, we implore your love with this confidence, that you may assist us in the worldly tribulations with your prayers and extend good counsel! For since we have heard your name and the grace bestowed upon you by Christ, we have always held your memory in our hearts, and we desire that the same grace which is from the true light may always remain with you.

Letter 40: R40: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Bf. H. from Prague

Hildegard's response is: The voice of life and salvation says. What is this that a man eats and does not want to know what it is, the grape that the earth brought forth differently after the destruction of the people, when God shook and sifted the earth in another way than the first man mocked it? This is because man is fickle through the change of his ways and through the times of light and darkness. For man sometimes rises somewhat in prosperity, then falls into danger. In both, man does not consider the embraces of the daughter of the king, namely, justice and truth. Instead, he cuts the crown from her head when the shepherd flees, not defending the Church of Christ, because he does not hold his arms in strength, but in his ways is like a wanton boy who has no care and plays. The man who does this desires to eat and live by his own will as human nature demands food, and does not see with sharp eyes where discretion lies, which has labored in wisdom, which is understood in this grape. When in the dawn of the world obedience was mocked, the times passed until the outpouring of waters, when God cleansed the earth from horrible iniquity and gave it a new power, where Noah, the noblest offspring of obedience, produced in vineyards what Adam fled by the simplicity of his ways like a wanton boy. But in Noah, the earth bore the strength of the grape, where also after him wisdom rose in salvation. Now, O man who wanders in your ways through the streets of your changes, and do not look earnestly at your own and another's remedy, rise up looking at the sun in right moderation and do not flee the light, casting it away through the harshness of iniquity! so that you may not be ashamed when the supreme King requires your works in His bag! and you will live forever.

Letter 41: R41: Bf. I. von Jerusalem to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Bishop of Jerusalem to Hildegard. By the grace and ordination of God, the unworthy servant and bishop of Jerusalem, to Hildegard, beloved daughter and mistress of the Mount of Saint Rupert in Bingen, within the diocese of Mainz, with humble prayer and greeting in Christ. From many who have come to our parts from long distances and who have often bent their knees at the tomb of the Lord, we have frequently heard that divine virtue works in you and through you, for which we humbly offer unceasing thanks as best we can. Therefore, to you, most beloved daughter, our words have long been directed, but because there has been no messenger until now, our desire has been entirely frustrated.

Now, however, since after the long course of time, an opportunity has presented itself, we have deemed it fitting to address you and all your sisters who, as I hear, are subject to you in Christ, through these present letters. Therefore, if any sweet words could be present to us in the extreme anguish with which we are constantly pressed, since on one side we are attacked by the snares of malicious spirits and on the other by the sword of pagans, we would think it worthy to lift you up as the bride of Christ, always intent on the mysteries of Christ. But it is not necessary for you to be raised by human praises when you are mixed with the angelic praises granted by divine grace. We call those happy who daily deserve to be present at and be filled with your sweetest conversations. Truly, we have not inappropriately called those happy who, by the mirror of divine candor, strive daily to receive the reward of their meritorious course from the Lord. Truly, happy, exceedingly happy are those to whom all earthly things have become vile in the light of heavenly reward, and by whom everything in this life, which seems sweet, delightful, and excellent to other mortals, is despised, trampled upon, and

disregarded. Behold, truly, the daughters of Jerusalem, in whom no blemish is found, in whom the world has nothing it loves! Who also undoubtedly follow the Lamb wherever He goes. Now, O daughter, turning back to you, we humbly seek the consolation shown to you from heaven and commend ourselves and all your sisters to your prayers so that you may piously intercede for us in the storms of worldly cares with Him, whose chamber you desire to enter after the end of this life. May the Lord, O beloved, grant that you see the good of Jerusalem all the days of your life.

Letter 42: R42: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Bf. I. von Jerusalem

Response of Hildegard. The living light says these things in its miracles. The first root appeared in the day and flourished in all its branches! And it established two paths. One path was full of buildings, in which eagles and other birds dwelled. The other, however, was full of great opportunities, in which giants ran, who fought against these eagles and other birds! But they could not prevail over them. Then the sun came forth, and in its outstretched arm, it held golden shields and fought against those giants. For the fall of the first angel had fallen from life, and afterward, the fall of Adam lacked the light of paradise! And the same Adam walked in the suggestion of the devil with all his children. But the sun shone in topaz and sapphire, which is in mercy and charity, which produced the incarnate Word of God. The sun, however, shone equally as it had at the beginning and remained so that no shadow of change fell upon it, as had been the case with the first angel, with Adam, and in the suggestion of the devil. And therefore it is said, "You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek." For in topaz, mercy is understood, and in sapphire, charity is understood, which virtues this priest wore like a priestly garment for the sake of man.

Now you, O father, who are in the place of this priest, let your soul flow like the water that flowed from the rock in the rod of Moses, so that your words may give the drink of salvation to incredulous hearts! And let the day that shines in your soul grow in a multitude of virtues. However, I see you in your soul concerned about the path that leads to God. But when your mind goes into turmoil because of the changes in your labors and others, the dove will wash over you and make you a simple tower before the sight of God. The struggle you endure both inwardly and outwardly in both aspects of man, God will alleviate in your times around you so that you can endure

it! Therefore, place your trust in Him and do not despair of His mercy. And by doing this, you will live in the grace of God unto life.

Letter 43: R43: Henry of France to Hildegard of Rupertsberg

Bishop of Beauvais. Hildegard. Heinrich, by the grace of God called by name Bishop of Beauvais, to Hildegard, beloved teacher of the sisters on Mount Saint Rupert of Bingen! If the prayer of a contrite and humble sinner has any value in the spirit. Blessed be the Lord who has blessed you with every spiritual blessing, so that in the fragrance of the ointment with which God anointed you with the unction of His mercy, the devotion of many may be drawn through you to the farthest parts of the world. For the manifest favor of God towards you is a great consolation to me, a sinner, and burdened by the whirlwinds of the world, although far from you in body but not in mind. We trust without a doubt that through your merits and prayers, Christ's mercy is extended to all who faithfully seek the help of your prayers. We, therefore, in the distrust of our own conscience, having no confidence in our own deeds for attaining salvation, implore you by the charity of the Holy Spirit, in remote regions, to beseech the Lord with your prayers for the forgiveness of our sins. May He who is able to do all things and from whom no thought is hidden, according to His good pleasure, deign to fulfill the desire of our hearts through your prayers.

Letter 44: R44: Hildegard of Rupertsberg to Henry of France

Response of Hildegard.

Living Light! This was shown to me, and said: Say to that man, I saw a form of virtue, beautiful and pure knowledge. Her face was very bright, her eyes like hyacinth, and her garments like pale silk. She also had an episcopal pallium over her shoulders, similar to sardius. And she called upon a most beautiful friend of the king, namely, charity, saying: Come with me. And they both came and knocked at the door of your heart, saying: We wish to dwell with you. Therefore, beware lest you resist us, but be strong in resisting vices and secular matters, and the vicissitudes of those winds that rise in whirlwinds like foul smoke and like waters that fly in storms. These are the disquietudes of human minds in anger and other similar states. Do not have silence in weariness, but let your voice be like a trumpet resounding in the ceremonies of the Church, and let your eyes be pure in knowledge, so that you are not lazy in wiping away the unworthy dust of your burden. For you are full of the drops of the night, and the persuasion of pride has spoken thus to you: Do not wash yourself. But we do not want this. We want you to wipe away all darkness from yourself and not be afraid of the many terrors of your enemies who neither speak rightly nor well of you. O soldier, give us a dwelling place in your heart, and we will lead you to the palace of the king with us.

Letter 45: R45: Arnold I of Valcourt to Hildegard of Rupertsberg

Bishop of Trier. Hildegard.

Arnold, by the grace of God, humble elected of the Church of the Loyalists, to his beloved relative in Christ, Hildegard of Saint Rupert, greetings and love from Him who is salvation and love. The friendship of heavenly kinship is old, but it remains steadfast. Where it is true, it does not falter but grows and progresses daily. Since we have embraced you with the arms of true love from an early age, we wonder why you prefer a flatterer to a true friend when the prophet says: "The oil of the sinner will not anoint my head." We consider our brother, the prior of Saint Andrew, to be your flatterer! But we wish to be understood as your true friend. For we know that our true success is the matter of your joy. Therefore, we have decided to inform you of our prosperous return by the grace of God to your affection.

But because nothing is blessed to someone who considers it a punishment, we declare before God and you that the dignity to which we have been called, contrary to our will as God is our witness, has never attracted us as usually happens, nor has it ever delighted us. Therefore, because our ignorance and frailty mourn its insufficiency and lament its unworthiness, we do not know by whose calling we have been appointed to such a ministry. This inflicts great anxiety upon us. If we knew it was from God, we would believe that He who began a good work in us would also complete it, though we declare that we have been promoted to the priesthood more by necessity than by virtue.

And we know that God has worked salvation in His holy place among you, mercifully liberating the besieged and visiting His people. Therefore, we ask that you write back to us the manner of

the liberation of the besieged and that you often, in looking at the true light, impart something of the grace of salvation to us. And we beseech you earnestly to lift your hands, like Moses, to the rock of refuge on our behalf, for we fight against Amalek in the valley of worldly misery. This we ask most attentively. Since these things were written before the abbot of Saint Eucharis, our faithful and beloved, he sweetened our words with his help. Therefore, we wish that you send your reply to us through him.

Letter 46: R46: Hildegard of Rupertsberg to Arnold I of Valcourt

Response of Hildegard.

You are a tree established by God, as Paul says, "All power is from God," because according to the supreme teacher, by invoking His name, all power is named. Hence, in that tree, it has the greenness of the honor of His name. What, however, is apart from God and works wickedly is not with you, lest you fall into the descending sickness of pride with the first angel, namely Satan, who secretly wanted to steal honor from God, and whom many follow according to their own will, not caring in what way it is conferred upon them. This is nothing before God, because without Him it is nothing. Thus, God destroys whatever does not touch Him. Therefore, be subtle in this, so that by the precepts of God, which are multiplied like the leaves of a tree, you may bear witness to the people as much as you can through His grace. Many tribulations of your burden, like poverty, constrain you because riches and much money do not love heavenly things. Therefore, God withdraws man's own will so that he may long for the heavenly homeland.

Thus, it is fitting that the poor love the poor, and the rich recognize the rich, for wisdom gives a ring to the poor and denies it to the rich. Because of your priestly office, this is upon you: "I have not hidden Your justice in my heart; I have declared Your truth and Your salvation." It is said, the justice of God does not hide itself but spreads its paths and does not blush to run them. It does not hide wounds, preferring evil to good as if in justice there is life and hell, and one must run in both parts. In this deceit, justice does not languish nor kiss injustice with many words, but it tramples it entirely. Truth also does not praise works done without God but prepares to contradict them in battle like a good soldier.

Let the justice of God be your shield, and clothe yourself with His truth like a breastplate, so that you appear well-armed before God and not a fugitive through the association of vanity. Learn to suckle the breasts of justice. Also, learn to heal the wounds of sinners with penitence and mercy, just as the supreme healer left you an example to save the people.

You, who are placed in the greenness of a blessed man through the instruction of His name, do not regard the impious devil who is called impious because he loved no good. See that you do not glory in the treasures of money which, in the end, are malicious because they fail after thirty years or even one year. But rejoice on Mount Zion where the eternal help of the Most High exists in eternity, and every spirit praises the Lord. You also, be an ivory mountain from which windows launch darts in the righteous judgment of God's justice against your adversaries. Run also in the height of God's law and justice like a goat, lest you fall unarmed through instability, and let your children rise from the side of the Church and ask from you the food of justice. Therefore, learn good doctrine so that they may be satisfied through you.

I, as you commanded, looked to the true light and could scarcely see the beginning of good works. You indeed, more diligently perform good works so that by the grace of God I may write more afterward, and be a faithful friend to your soul so that you may live in eternity.

Regarding the woman who was besieged, about whom you inquire, we have seen many wonders, which we cannot now send written. But we know that the diabolic inspiration decreased day by day until its retreat, and the same woman, liberated from the devil's fatigue, was occupied by an infirmity she did not recognize before, but now she has received the full health of both body and soul.

Letter 47: R47: Philipp I of Heinsberg to Hildegard of Rupertsberg

Bishop of Cologne. To Hildegard.

Philipp, by the grace of God, Archbishop of Cologne, to Hildegard, his beloved sister, wonderfully infused with divine inspiration, who continually longs to cling to Him in celestial glory. Although the diversity of places removes the grace of mutual sight and desirable conversation from us, those whom the charity of Christ has joined are nevertheless held by the nearness of souls. Therefore, dearest mother, it is because of this that in this year, while the passage of life and the long-desired grace of seeing you was anticipated, the illness and frailty of your body disturbed and struck my heart and many others in our land who embrace you in Christ, always wishing for your health and true eternal salvation. Therefore, it pleased and seemed fitting to us to inquire and be assured of your condition and especially to inform you that we are daily so disturbed by the whirlwinds and storms of worldly affairs that we scarcely ever attempt to lift the eyes of our minds to heavenly things.

But because the diligence of many knows you are infused with the gift of divine charisma, which the faithful assembly of the church rejoices in, and we, in our small measure of discretion, also congratulate you, knowing that a man dwelling in the flesh and conversing in heaven, as the voice of the apostle says, is endowed with such a gift. Thus, like a discoverer of good pearls, seek from the hidden things of God what we ask and send us advisory words as God grants you. For according to the truthful one, there is no use in wisdom and hidden treasure. Farewell.

Letter 48: R48: Hildegard of Rupertsberg to Philipp I of Heinsberg

Hildegard.

In the mystical inspiration of true vision, I saw and heard these words: Fiery charity, which is God, says to you. The star that shines under the sun, what name can it have in its part? It is called "bright," for it shines more than other stars through the sun. But how would it be fitting for the same star to hide its light so that it shines less than other, smaller stars? For if it did this, it would not have a glorious name but would be called a blind name, because although it is said to be bright, its light would not be seen. Likewise, a soldier who comes to battle without armor will surely be trampled by his enemies, because he has not surrounded his body with a breastplate, nor has he placed a helmet on his head, nor covered himself with a shield. Hence, he will be captured in great confusion.

But you, who are called a bright star through the episcopal office and who radiate from the name of the highest priest, do not hide your light, which is the words of justice, from your subjects! For you often say in your heart: "If I frighten my subjects with words, they will be troubled with me because I cannot surpass them; would that I could maintain their friendship by remaining silent." It is not fitting for you to say and act thus. But what? Do not terrify them with harsh words because of the episcopal name and the nobility of your body, like a hawk catching prey, nor strike them with dangerous words like a club! Instead, mix words of justice with mercy for them and anoint them with the fear of God, proposing how dangerous injustice is to their souls and happiness. Surely, surely, surely, in this way, they will hear you.

Do not associate yourself with sordid and unstable morals, nor consider what pleases or displeases anyone, for if you do this, you

will appear lesser than others before God and men. For such things do not befit your person. Also, see that clean animals, which chew the cud, would be troubled if their food were mixed with the food of pigs by which they fatten. Likewise, if you join yourself to sordid morals and the company of sinners, you would be polluted, through which the wicked would rejoice, and the perfect men would be troubled, saying, "Oh, oh, woe, woe, what kind of bishop do we have? He does not shine for us on the straight paths of justice."

But rebuke and turn your people from hostile infidelity so that you are not naked of the breastplate of faith and show them the way of justice from the Holy Scriptures. And place the helmet of hope on your head and the shield of true defense on your neck so that in all calamities and dangers, you may be as much as possible a defender of the Church. Hold the light of truth so that you appear as a good soldier in my militia, which is true charity, and be strong and brave in the shipwrecked world and in the hard battles of iniquity, so that you shine as a bright star in eternal happiness.

Now, O father, who bears the pastoral name, do not disdain the poverty of the one writing these things, for I did not dictate or bring forth these things according to myself or any other man, but I wrote them in this way as I saw and heard them in a true vision with a vigilant mind and body, because you ordered me to write something to you.

Letter 49: R49: Conrad III to Hildegard of Rupertsberg

Conrad Emperor. To Hildegard.

Conrad, by the favor of divine grace, King of the Romans, to Hildegard, a virgin dedicated to God and teacher of the sisters at Saint Rupert in Bingen, greetings and my grace. Because we are hindered by royal duties and shaken by various turmoils and storms, we are unable to visit you as we desire. However, we will not fail to reach out to you by our letters. For we have heard that the confession of highest praise truly abounds in you through the sanctity of an innocent life and the magnificence of the Spirit wonderfully coming upon you from above. Therefore, although we are much occupied with secular matters, we hasten to you, we seek refuge with you, and we humbly ask for the support of your prayers and exhortations, for we live far differently than we ought.

You should know for certain that we will strive to be of service and assistance to you and your sisters in every cause and in every necessity. Hence, I also commend my son, whom I wish to be my successor, to your prayers as I commend myself.

Letter 50: R50: Hildegard of Rupertsberg to Conrad III

To Emperor Conrad. From Hildegard.

He who gives life to all says: Blessed are those who worthily remain under the candelabrum of the Supreme King and whom God, in His great providence, cares for so that He does not cut them off from His embrace. In Him, O King, remain and cast off the filth from your mind, for God preserves everyone who seeks Him devoutly and purely. But also, hold your kingdom in such a way and provide justice to each of your subjects so that you do not become alien to the supreme kingdom.

Hear this. In some part, you turn away from God, and the times in which you live are as light as a woman's personality, and even in opposition to justice, which tries to overthrow justice in the vineyard of the Lord, you are inclined. After these things, worse times will come in which the true Israelites will be scourged, and in which the Catholic throne will be moved into error. And thus, their last days will be like a corpse in the death of blasphemy. Hence, this sorrow smokes in the vineyard of the Lord. And after this, stronger times than the former will arise in which the justice of God will be somewhat uplifted, and in which the injustice of the spiritual people will be marked for expulsion, but it will not yet dare to provoke or exacerbate to bitter contrition.

But then other times will arise in which the riches of the churches will be scattered, so much so that even the spiritual people will be torn apart like wolves and expelled from their places and their homeland. Hence, many of them will go into solitude, living a poor life in much contrition of heart, henceforth serving God humbly. For these first times are squalid concerning the justice of God, the following are tedious. But those that come afterward will lift themselves somewhat towards justice, but those that arise later will divide everything like a bear and accumulate riches for themselves

through evil means. But those that follow will show the sign of manly strength, so that all decorated ones will run to the first dawn of justice with fear, modesty, and wisdom, and the princes will have unanimous concord, lifting it like a banner against the errant times of greatest errors, which God will destroy and exterminate according to what He knows and as He pleases.

And again, He who knows all says to you, O King. These things you hear, curb your own desires and correct yourself so that you may come to those times purified, in which you will no longer be ashamed of your deeds.

Letter 51: R51: Friedrich Barbarossa to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Emperor Frederick. To Hildegard.

Frederick, by the grace of God, Emperor of the Romans and ever august, to Lady Hildegard of Bingen, his grace and all good things. We make known to your holiness that the things you predicted to us while we were staying in Ingelheim, and which we requested you to come to our presence to discuss, are now in our hands. However, we will still strive with all effort and for the honor of the realm.

Therefore, we earnestly urge you, in your affection, to offer prayers to Almighty God with the sisters entrusted to you on our behalf, so that in our earthly labors, He may turn us to Himself and we may obtain His grace. You must know for certain that in every matter brought to us by you, we will neither consider the friendship nor the enmity of any person, but will judge with equity solely out of regard for justice.

Letter 52: R52: Hildegard of Rupertsberg to Friedrich Barbarossa

To Emperor Frederick. From Hildegard.

From the supreme judge, these words are directed to you. It is very remarkable that man holds this necessary position, namely you, O King. Listen. A certain man stood on a high mountain and looked into all the valleys, seeing what each person did in them. Holding a rod in his hand, he divided everything correctly, making what was dry green and what was asleep awake. This rod also took away the stupor of those who were in great stupor. When the man did not open his eyes, a black cloud came and touched those valleys, and crows and other birds scattered all around.

Now, O King, carefully foresee, for all regions are overshadowed by the deceitful crowd of those who in the blackness of sin destroy justice. Plunderers and wanderers destroy the way of the Lord. O you, King! With the scepter of mercy, rule the lazy, the wanderers, and the most severe customs. You indeed have a glorious name because you are a king in Israel. Your name is very glorious. Therefore, see when the supreme King considers you, lest you be accused of not rightly judging your office and then be ashamed, which God forbid.

It is manifest that it is just for a ruler to imitate his predecessors in goodness, for the very black customs of those prelates who run in lasciviousness and decay are dark. Flee this, O King. Be an armed soldier, strongly resisting the devil, lest God scatter you and your earthly kingdom be ashamed of this. May God deliver you from eternal perdition, and may your times not be dry. May God protect you to live forever. Cast off avarice and choose abstinence, which the supreme King greatly loves. It is very necessary that you be prudent in your causes. I see you in mystical vision, living among

many whirlwinds and adversities before living eyes. Yet, you still have time to reign in earthly matters.

Therefore, beware lest the supreme King overthrow you because of the blindness of your eyes, which do not see rightly how you should hold the rod of ruling correctly in your hand. See also that you are such that the grace of God does not fail in you.

Letter 53: R53: Count Philip of Flanders to Hildegard of Rupertsberg

To Hildegard. From Philip, Count of Flanders.

Philip, Count of Flanders and Vermandois, to Lady Hildegard, servant of Christ, greetings and much affection. Your holiness should know that I am prepared to do whatever I know would please you, for your holy conduct and most honorable life have often reached my ears, sweeter than any fame. Though I am a sinner and unworthy, I love and honor with all my heart the servants and friends of Christ with all kinds of veneration, mindful of the scripture that says the continual prayer of a righteous person is very powerful.

Therefore, I am sending to your grace the bearer of this present letter, my most faithful servant, who will speak with you on my behalf, a miserable sinner, as I would much prefer to come to you and speak to you myself about what I desire. But my affairs are so many and arise daily, preventing me from having the leisure for this. The time is also approaching for me to undertake the journey to Jerusalem, for which I need great preparation. I ask that you kindly share your counsel with me through your letters.

I believe the fame of my name and actions often reaches you, and I am in great need of God's mercy. Therefore, I humbly and earnestly entreat you to intercede with God on my behalf, a most miserable and unworthy sinner. I also humbly ask that, as far as divine mercy grants you, you inquire of God what is best for me and let me know your counsel through the bearer of this letter, what and how I should act so that the name of Christ may be exalted in my times and the dreadful ferocity of the Saracens may be subdued. And whether it will be useful for me to stay in that land or to return, in accordance

with what you may have heard about my situation or have known or will know by divine revelation.

Farewell in Christ, beloved sister, and know that I greatly desire to hear your counsel and have the utmost confidence in your prayers.

Letter 54: R54: Hildegard of Rupertsberg to Count Philip of Flanders

To Philip, Count of Flanders. From Hildegard.

O son of God, for He fashioned you in the first man. Hear the words which, with a vigilant mind and body, I have seen and heard in my soul when, because of your diligent inquiry, I looked into the true light. God gave a commandment to Adam in paradise and, after he transgressed that commandment by consenting to the serpent's counsel, expelled him from paradise with just judgment. With the same just judgment, God drowned those men who had entirely forgotten Him and neither desired nor sought Him, in the flood, saving those who loved and sought Him through the ark.

But the most gentle lamb, namely the Son of God, in the blood which He shed hanging on the cross, washes away all sins and crimes that man acknowledges through true penitence and saves them. Now, however, attend, O son of God, that with a pure eye of justice you may look to God like an eagle to the sun so that without the propriety of your own will, your judgments may be just. Lest the supreme judge, who gave the commandment to man and also in mercy calls him to Himself through penitence, say to you: "Why did you kill your neighbor without my justice?" And men who are judged as guilty, you should bind according to the scriptures of the saints, who were the pillars of the church, with law and with the fear of death, always attending to the curse of that man who committed murder in his anger.

You also, for all your negligence and sins and for all your unjust judgments, flee to the living God with the sign of the cross, who is the way and the truth, and who also says: "I do not desire the death of a sinner, but rather that he be converted and live." And if the time comes when the infidels attempt to destroy the fountain of faith, then

resist them as much as you can with the help of God's grace. For I see in my soul that the care you have for the troubles of your soul is like the dawn that rises in the morning. Therefore, may the Holy Spirit make you a burning sun in pure and true penitence, so that you seek Him and serve Him alone, so that you may live in supreme blessedness forever.

Letter 55: R55: Bernhard von Clairvaux to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

To the beloved daughter in Christ, Hildegard. From Brother Bernard, called the Abbot of Clairvaux.

If the prayer of a sinner avails anything, some seem to think much more of our worth than our conscience allows. This should be attributed not to our merits but to the foolishness of men. However, I hasten to write to you with the sweetness of holy charity, though much more briefly than I would wish, compelled by the multitude of business. We rejoice in the grace of God which is in you, and we admonish you to hold it as grace and to strive to respond to it with all humility and devotion, knowing that God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.

To the extent that it is in us, we exhort and beseech you. However, where there is inner instruction and an anointing that teaches about all things, what can we either teach or advise? You are said to explore the heavenly secrets and to be illuminated by the Holy Spirit about things beyond human comprehension. Therefore, we ask more and humbly implore you to remember us before God, as well as those who are spiritually united with us in the Lord. For when your spirit is joined to God, we trust that you can greatly benefit and assist us, since the continual prayer of a righteous person is very powerful.

We also pray continuously for you, that you may be strengthened in good works, instructed in deeper matters, and guided towards what is enduring. May those who despair be put to shame through you, but may you be well strengthened in the progress of the blessing which you are known to have received from God, continually improving and excelling.

Letter 56: R56: Hildegard of Rupertsberg to Bernhard of Clairvaux

To Abbot Bernard of Clairvaux. From Hildegard.

In the spirit of the mysteries of God, I speak to you. O venerable father, who are marvelously to be feared in the great honors of God's virtue against the illicit foolishness of this world, bearing the banner of the Holy Cross with exalted zeal in the ardent love of the Son of God, capturing men for battles in the Christian militia against the tyranny of cruelty, which I am deeply constrained to see in the vision that appears to me in the spirit of mystery, which I do not see with the external eyes of the flesh. I, a miserable and more than miserable being, have seen great wonders in my feminine state since my childhood, wonders which my tongue cannot express, except as the Spirit of God teaches me how to speak of them.

Most assuredly and kindly, father, hear me in your goodness, your unworthy servant. I have never lived securely since my childhood. Consider your piety and wisdom in your soul as you have been taught in the Holy Spirit, for the things said to you about me are true. I know within the text of the inner understanding of the exposition of the Psalter, the Gospel, and other volumes which are shown to me in this vision that touches my heart and teaches my soul like a burning flame these profound expositions. Yet, it does not teach me the letters in the German language which I do not know; I only know how to read in simplicity, not in the dissecting of the text. For I am an uneducated person in any exterior teaching, but within my soul, I am taught, hence I speak to you about you without doubting, but I take comfort in your wisdom and piety.

Because there are many schisms among men, as I hear people say, I told these things first to a certain monk whom I examined in the conversation of a more proven life, and I revealed all my secrets to

him, and he consoled me, so that these great and fearful things are so. I wish, father, that for the love of God, you remember me in your prayers. Two years ago, I saw you in this vision as a man looking at the sun and not fearing but being very bold! And I wept because I am so timid and shy.

Good and most kind father, I place myself in your soul, pray for me, for I have great labors in this vision, so that I may say what I see and hear. And sometimes, in great infirmities from this vision, I am laid low in bed because I am silent, so that I cannot rise. Therefore, with sorrow, I lament before you because I am mobile in nature, like a tree in a winepress, sprouting from the root arising in Adam, who was made an exile in the wandering world through the suggestion of the devil. Now, however, I rise and run to you. I say to you, you are not mobile but always raising the tree, and you are a victor in your soul, not only raising yourself alone but also other men to salvation.

You are also an eagle looking at the sun. I pray to you by the serenity of the Father and by His wonderful Word and by the sweet moisture of compunction, namely the spirit of truth, and by the holy sound that every creature makes, and by that Word through which the world arose, and by the height of the Father who sent the Word in His living viridity into the womb of the Virgin, from which it sucked the flesh as honey is built around the comb, that you do not become sluggish in words, but place them in your heart, so that you do not cease while you pass through the aperture of your soul to God, looking through me because He desires you. Farewell, farewell in your soul, and be strong in the struggle in God. Amen.

Letter 57: R57: Adam of Ebrach to Hildegard of Rupertsberg

To the most beloved Lady and Mother, Hildegard, teacher of the sisters of Saint Rupert in Bingen, from Brother Adam, though unworthy, Abbot of Ebrach, a modest offering.

From the moment I first received news of your name, I rejoiced with great joy. God increased my joy when, with a kind and wonderful nod, He directed you to be seen and your voice to be heard in our land. And what I could scarcely hope for, a mutual conversation was granted to me. Concerning what I shared with you in my anxiety, I trust you have not forgotten. Because different people have different opinions, some think one thing, others another. If it is good and salvation before the Lord, blessed be God! If it is perilous, pray to God that He grants me good and the salvation of my soul and removes all peril.

Now, I send letters and our messenger to the Lord Emperor on your behalf, and I hope by God's grace we will be heard! And wherever you need our service, we will be ready to serve you. We also beseech you to deign to pray for us, for truly we are in a storm due to the care of our brothers. May the grace of the Holy Spirit, which works many wonders in you through the spirit of prophecy, also look upon us and protect us. We also ask that you console and fortify us with your writings.

Letter 58: R58: Hildegard of Rupertsberg to Adam of Ebrach

Response of Hildegard.

In the true vision, with a spirit vigilant in the body, I heard these words. He who is says: The sun shines and sends forth its rays. There was a certain man, a friend of the sun, who had a garden in which he desired to plant many spices and many flowers with great care. And the sun, in the fire of its rays, sent warmth over the spices and flowers, and the dew and rain gave them the moisture of greenness. Then from the north came a twisted figure with black hair and a horrible face, and from the east came a very beautiful young man with white hair and a lovely face, and they both came to the garden. The twisted figure said to the young man, "Where do you come from?" He replied, "I come from the east to the garden of this wise man, because I have a great desire to come to him." The twisted figure said, "Listen to me. Dangerous winds, hail, fire, and pestilence will come upon this garden and dry it up." But the young man responded, "It will not be so, because I do not want it. I will bring forth a very pure fountain and irrigate this garden." And the twisted figure replied, "Woe, woe, this is as likely as a locust piercing a hard stone." And thus that figure, in its deceit, brought winter upon the garden and wanted to dry up its spices and flowers. But the aforementioned young man, busy with his duties and playing his lyre, did not see it. And when he saw this, he called the sun with a loud voice to come in the sign of Taurus and bring back the greenness of summer to the garden. Thus, taking an ivory horn and a horn from a deer, he struck down the twisted figure to the ground with them.

Then he said to the man whose garden it was, "From now on, do not trust so carelessly, but surround your garden with such fortification that the blackest birds in storms do not dry it up." Now, O father,

who through your supreme vocation are in the place of Christ, understand these words spoken to you. Hear this, for the wisdom of God sometimes allows the sun to shine, and at other times, the sun withdraws its rays. It does this sometimes in wisdom, other times in greenness, and again in moisture. Wisdom falls upon fertile nature, greenness indeed bears great labors, and moisture goes into bitter hardship. But you, a man friendly to God's grace, have the garden of people in which you must carefully plant many good desires and good works in the place of Christ. And the grace of God, in the power of His gifts, sends forth the effectiveness of good will over these desires and works and makes them grow with the dew and rain of the fountain of living water.

But from the devil come vices, in the restlessness of vain glory and the noise of obstinacy resisting righteous instruction, whereas from God come virtues in the contempt of worldly matters, with full benevolence of subjection in charity, coming to these people. And vices ask the virtues why they have come. The virtues reply that they have come from God to the people of God's friend because they have a great desire to build an altar of praise in them. And the vices say, to hear these words, "Great ruin, wrath, and questioning with much restlessness will come upon these people, so that they will be weary in the service of God." And the virtues respond, "It will not happen so, for we will not cease in good works, but a living fountain will flow, and in His mercy, God will defend these people."

But the vices of the devil, laughing, say that this is as possible as if frailty fixed in flesh could last without a wrinkle. Then, in their deceit, the vices bring a cold cloud of ignorance over the people, so that their good desires and good works are now failing, for they trust in themselves. But the virtues, serving God with praise, allow this to happen by God's just judgment, so that men may understand what they are. When they return to themselves in the humility of the virtues, the virtues hold fast to the grace of God with great care, so

that they may impress the passion of Christ upon their minds, so that in this way they may lead the people to the original praise of God. And thus, considering the divinity and humanity of the Son of God, they cast down those vices into contrition.

And they say to the one under whom these people are, "Thus warned, do not trust in your own strength, but foresee that you flee to the grace of God so that you may fortify and admonish your people in every way, so that the devil's snares with various vices do not overthrow them through negligence." I also saw a most beautiful maiden, shining with such splendor that I could not fully look at her. She had a mantle whiter than snow and brighter than the stars. Her shoes were like the purest gold. She held the sun and the moon in her right hand and embraced them gently. On her chest was an ivory tablet with the image of a man in sapphire color, and all creation called this maiden "Lady."

And she herself said to the image on her chest, "With you is the beginning in the day of your power, in the splendor of the saints, from the womb before the morning star, I have begotten you." And I heard a voice saying to me, "This maiden you see is Charity, who has her dwelling in eternity. When God willed to create the world, He inclined toward it in His most sweet love and provided all that was necessary, just as a father prepares an inheritance for his son. And so, in great ardor, He arranged all His works. Then creation, in its forms and appearances, recognized its Creator, for Charity was the matter of its beginning when God said, 'Let it be,' and it was done, for every creature was formed through her in the blink of an eye."

"She shines with such splendor that you cannot look at her perfectly, for she shows the fear of the Lord in such pure knowledge that mortal man cannot fully comprehend it. She has a mantle whiter than snow and brighter than stars because, without pretense, she

comprehends everything in the pure innocence of her radiant works in the saints. Her shoes are like the purest gold because she walks in the best paths of God's chosen ones. She holds the sun and the moon in her right hand and embraces them gently because the right hand of God encompasses all creatures, and because she is also extended among the peoples, in the rain, and in all good things."

"Thus it is written, 'The Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand.' On her chest is an ivory tablet because in the knowledge of God, the integrity of virginity always flourished in Mary, so that in her appeared the image of man in sapphire color because the Son of God shone forth in Charity from ancient days. And all creation calls this maiden 'Lady,' for she came forth from her, and she was the primordial one creating all things, as the image on her chest shows, for God assumed humanity for man's sake."

"When every creature was fulfilled by God's command, as He said, 'Increase and multiply and fill the earth,' the warmth of the true sun descended like dew into the womb of the Virgin and made a man from her flesh, just as He had formed Adam from the clay of the earth, flesh, and blood."

And the Virgin bore Him in purity. But it was not fitting that charity should lack wings. When creation first lived in a circle so that it wished to fly under pressure and fell, the wings of charity lifted it up. This was holy humility. For when the terrible sense overcame Adam, divinity keenly observed that he should not perish utterly in the fall, but that he should be redeemed in holy humanity. These were the wings of great power: humility in the humanity of the Savior lifted the fallen man, for charity created man, and humility redeemed him.

Hope is like the eye of charity, while heavenly love is its heart, and abstinence is its sinew. But faith is like the eye of humility, obedience is like its heart, and contempt for evil is its sinew. Charity

existed in eternity and, in the beginning of all holiness, brought forth all creatures without the admixture of evil, and created Adam and Eve from the pure nature of the earth. And just as these two produced all the children of men, so these two virtues produce all other virtues. These virtues knock at your door, O man to whom I speak, and say, "O, the tabernacle of this man who remains with us in the morning is now in weariness." And charity says to you, "Oh good friend! We do not want you to withdraw from your official duty. For when God willed to scatter all creatures in the circle of heaven, we embraced all His works and labored with Him. But man fell, and we wept with him and did not leave him, although he struck us on the jaw. And humility says to you in particular, 'Alas, alas, in what great pains I have sustained man.' But you say, 'I want to flee.' Yet you have a burden to carry in the vineyard, and you stand still, unwilling to walk, but you roll in weariness and look to another path. Surely, our companion will not do so. When the people love you, labor with them. But when the roar of the wind blows with the restlessness of war and the change of customs, come to me, and I will help you in the wheel of the power of my wings. Samson lost his great strength through the foolishness of a woman. Beware, therefore, that this does not happen to you if you give in to weariness. The glory of Solomon was also voided through the foolishness of women. Be careful with great concern that the greenness which you have from God does not wither through the changes of your thoughts. But observe the adornments of gold and precious stone that charity and humility have in you. And because of the bracelets which wisdom has given you, and for which the people run to you, give glory to God and labor with the people, and thus you will remain with the sun.

And you, father, listen. Just as the morning star precedes the dawn in its light, so offer help to all from the kiss of love which God has

given you, and He will give you life which He has seen in the first day."

Letter 59: R59: Eberhard von Eberbach to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

To the beloved and venerable lady and mother, Hildegard, in Bingen, from Brother E., though unworthy, Abbot of Eberbach, a modest offering.

We magnify and glorify Christ our Savior for you, who looks upon those who tremble and exalts the humble, who has also done great things for you because He is mighty. He has chosen, as we have heard and seen, the sanctuary of your heart as His dwelling place and has revealed divine knowledge in the certain and hidden wisdom of His. He has brought you into His chamber to the flowers of the roses and the lilies of the valleys, to the blooming fields of the eternal mountains. His left hand is under your head, and His right hand embraces you so that you may truly say, "My beloved is mine, and I am His."

In all these things, your name is like poured-out oil, and therefore the young maidens have loved you. And we run in the fragrance of your ointments. We pray and ask the Lord that He may deign to preserve both the gifts of nature and the graces He has bestowed upon you for His glory, for your crown, for our joy, and as an example to many. We also pray and humbly request that you deign to remember us and commend our smallness to your Bridegroom at His coming so that, as we rejoice and are glad about your reputation for holiness, we may also deserve to receive joy and exultation through your intercession.

If you deign to command anything of our service, we will gladly embrace it and act as we have done before, ready to serve your every holy will.

Letter 60: R60: Hildegard of Rupertsberg to Eberhard of Eberbach

Response of Hildegard.

He who is says: The serene light sees the stable and the set meal of each congregation, which has its office in its ministry, distributing the food of refreshment in right moderation so that joy of soul is not lacking for the faithful adhering to it. The pastoral steward should give the sword in its sheath to the strongest minds and show the arrows in the quiver with the sweetest manners, and bestow the spices of medicines with capacious benevolence. But black tyrants carry the scourges of slaughter. A good soldier fights without the weariness of mockery, and a sweet sense captures sufficiency in communal good labor. And the feasting manners, girded in righteousness, are in all virtues so that they hunger to perfect justice.

But the most severe and merciless wanderers from a noble mother of mercy slay the simple sheep that are in the courts of the King's house. Alas, alas, those who rage so in slaughter, unless they repent, are wanderers from the house of the King, for they scatter the Lord's sheep. But you, O shepherd, have a cheerful face in the misery of the poor who are faint-hearted, not able to grasp the plow of discipline. Let good deeds and benevolence be in you as the symphony of the Holy Spirit.

Also, beware that you do not grow dull in the light, but let your understanding be vigilant, and do not be double-tongued, so that you say something different inwardly than you sound outwardly. Those who do this obscure their face in darkness. But if afterward, they tremble with fear because they do not grasp in their hearts what they show on their face, they are snatched from infidelity, struck down in their guilt.

But for you, O man, refreshment will be in the girding of your loins, where you have true desire in your hands when you do not neglect the treasure of true wealth. The earth sleeps for you, for the shipwreck of the world does not harm you. At the end of your time, God will raise you up. He Himself has established you in great honor. O good servant, you will praise Him, and He will save you forever.

Letter 61: R61: Abt E. von St. Anastasius to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Lady Hildegard,

Abbot of Saint Anastasius to the beloved and most devoted sister Hildegard, by the grace of God, master in the convent of Saint Robert, Brother E., called Abbot of Saint Anastasius, greetings and prayers.

Glory to God, for you are a good fragrance of Christ both among your own and among ours. The good name of Christ is blessed and praised through you, and He who is sanctified in you. For you glorify and bear Christ in your body, making yourself worthy of the calling with which you were called, and cooperating with the grace that has been given to you, presenting yourself to all in the house of the Lord as a vessel for honor. And since you are the familiar instrument of Christ and the receptacle of His spirit, we humbly ask you to pray in spirit and in truth for me and those entrusted to our care, that He may perfect in us what He has begun, both to will and to work for His good pleasure, so that we too may complete the course of the good fight in Christ and may glory together in His praise.

Moreover, I ask that the Spirit who reveals the hidden and secret things of His wisdom may indicate to you what is expedient for me in bearing the burden of Christ's obedience, whether to persevere or to rest, that I may be free for His contemplation. Whatever is revealed to you concerning this, do not hide it from me, for my heart is prepared, O God, my heart is prepared to do Your will.

We need the book you have written to be written for us as well, with your advice and help, and with your good will. For we greatly desire to have it and to behold the wonders of God in it. Furthermore, I earnestly request that we be visited and consoled by the letter of

your writings, and in labor and patience for Christ, by the abundance of Christ's consolation through you.

Farewell. Greet your sisters and pray for us.

Letter 62: R62: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Abt E. von St. Anastasius

Reply of Lady Hildegard.

He who is says to you, O man: Your mind rises eagerly through the opinion of good works, and you lift yourself up high, desiring to do more than you accomplish. But sometimes this very mind deceives you by sifting your reasons, saying: These are the best things, which you do not yet accomplish. Therefore, you discard the very reason that you have in your hand and in your purpose.

So, perfect the sustenance of your flock and give them precepts, namely, providing the rod of the master, and afterward exhibiting the ointment of the physician. For it is more useful to you to be vigilant in this labor, instructing others who minister in subjection through your teaching, than to exercise yourself in your own will. For if you were to subject yourself to weariness, weariness would enclose you, so that your mind would wither. Therefore, be vigilant over your flock, providing them with the good examples that your soul desires, lest your mind fall into derision.

For he who stands on high and cries out in the valley sometimes knows not where he goes in either. Therefore, stand in humility, so that with God's help, you may perform the good works you have begun, and remain in the footsteps of Christ. Do not deceive yourself, and you will live forever.

Letter 63: R63: Konrad von Kaisheim to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Abbot of Kaisheim to Hildegard,

Conrad of Kaisheim, though unworthy, to the most holy lady Hildegard, prioress in the convent of Saint Robert in Bingen, devoted prayers with humble obedience.

From the time I first heard of your distinguished virtues, most holy mother, and the special gift bestowed upon you by God, though unknown to you in bodily presence, I have loved you with all the affection of my mind. I rejoice therefore in your glory, because you have merited to find the beloved whom your soul has sought, and you do not need to wander after the flocks of companions, for He who feeds among the lilies has rested in your tabernacle, filling your garden with an abundance of diverse delights.

I am, however, astonished, dearest lady, that while you are like a rivulet emanating from the very source of goodness, spreading your benevolence to all who desire to know and hear the wonders of God through you, you close the bowels of compassion to me, who labor in great anxiety of heart, and delay sending the little gift which I desire out of charity rather than presumption.

Therefore, I beseech you with all devotion, to intercede for me with the very Bridegroom who rests in the bed of your heart, who willingly inclines the ear of His mercy to your petitions, and to ask Him to reveal to you whether it is more beneficial for me to lay down the burden of pastoral care or to bear it longer, for I am greatly pressed by it and give myself over to oblivion. But in this I will know that you have been heard if I receive your response. Farewell, dear to God.

Letter 64: R64: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Konrad von Kaisheim

Reply of Hildegard.

A sharp light sees and says: O man, you are pale with the doubt of your mind, as if you cannot stand firm. And why is this? I see your works. They indeed touch me. But you know the recognition of the rebellious. Why then do you blush before my altar to look upon my sanctuary, to adorn it like a temple with living eyes? O burden, where the good shepherd has lifted his lambs onto his shoulders. Where the sheep do not walk along straight paths, the gentle shepherd must lift them with the care of his mind, correct and anoint them, and teach them in good works.

And as the hand works in the arm, and as the arm moves in the shoulder, so must the shepherd extend examples of good works to his sheep in the hand, offer assistance in the arm, and bind various vices through the bond of the cross as if in the shoulder of power. For truly, to the penitent, their vices must be forgiven. The devil vomits the force of his heart, the taste of his throat, and the burning flame of his viperous mouth. O man! Hear the wailing of sorrow in the outpouring of sin, which is in the contamination of the flesh in the fair form of man.

Weep, O virginity, for the integrity of your first origin. For the hand of the highest artist formed you and placed you in the garden of delight. But the burning mind of man deceived him in the vain choice of his will, through the pride of the wicked counselor, the deceiver. Hence he was expelled through the taste of disobedience. And thus his belly transgressed when before his side had been pierced through the most holy gift. But now his thigh is polluted with sweating poison. Thus man touched the taste of the serpent's throat when he burned in his venomous veins. Hence afterward he

fornicated in the viperous desire, which is the burning flame from the mouth of the devil. Now disobedience has brought forth food. And since God made woman from the rib, therefore the devil afterward suggested murder, so that he might lead all his works through another path into the revelation of sins boiling over through the force of his heart.

O man, what great crimes you commit in the likeness of the ancient destroyer. How? For the worst accuser was cast down and cut off from all blessedness. And because he was cast backward, he thought in the malice of his heart to lead man backward into contrary sin. Thus man leaves the form of the rib, whence the formation of man perishes in such an outpoured seed. Let the earth mourn and the heavens tremble because of these crimes. For when man sins through the taste of his work, not leaving the formation of the rib, he feels somewhat what is the work of God. But these backward-moving crimes are not in any creation, because the man who commits them does not see himself as a man.

O man! Why do you cast away what is the work of God? Alas, alas, O man, in great diligence God formed you, but you involve yourself in many crimes. But God will again bring you back to Himself through His Son. Therefore, rise through repentance and quickly run to me. Now, O soldier, be strong and armed on the straight paths, and bring forth greenness where there is dryness, and care for the girding of the loins of those who are with you, and restrain yourself in good works, so that your heart may be illuminated in the sun and you may not grow weary on the right path, fighting against yourself. Therefore, do not abandon pastoral care, for the perfumer who has a well-irrigated and fragrant garden must see that his garden brings forth the utility of its fruits so that it does not fail.

For when your eye sees and your knowledge watches, why do you sleep like one weary in the girding of right care for your flock?

Therefore, diligently surround in good care lest you hide your talent unhappily, for it does not profit you to cast off that bond by which you are bound while you have two eyes or one, or any part of life under your care. But if you see no eye of life in your charge but always limping, then flee and abstain from your office.

Letter 65: R65: Manegold von Hirsau to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

To Hildegard from the Abbot of Hirsau,

To the most holy lady and mother Hildegard, M., the unworthy abbot of Hirsau, prayer with obedience.

Indeed, I have heard that in Cyrene a certain vein of waters flows with wine, and that you, good mother, among the Alamanni are a vein for those entering and exiting, and are seen as the bosom of spices and as the pupil of the eye. For you, my lady, draw in and pour out, and you exist in specific forms and as movement in theory and practice. Therefore, for a long time and still now, I have been impelled to love you, honor you, admire you, serve you and yours, and in all things, whether by word or deed, to be yours and of yours, in prayers as much as is permitted to me and in obediences.

I ask you, my mother and lady, remember me in your most holy prayers, love the one who humbly loves you, recognize in Christ the one who reveres you, and respond to me with letters prayed for in God.

Letter 66: R66: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Manegold von Hirsau

Reply of Hildegard.

O most beloved father and brother in the love of Christ! I see a pot surrounded by such great brightness that I can scarcely see if it is a pot. But there I also see a small taste of bitterness, yet it is crushed with great effort, and afterward, a whirlwind which is nevertheless destined for the reward of God. Therefore, be vigilant and strong, for the cause of the people in these times demands such things. O most gentle father! I, a poor little form, do not see in the true light that you should be moved entirely from your office.

Remember, however, that you are a man on earth, and do not be greatly afraid, for God does not require different things from you. For in the presence of God, you are like the smoke of myrrh and frankincense, from which Mount Zion seeks that you be food in the house of Jacob. But if someone cuts down the column that supports the whole house, he brings the house down. Therefore, look through seven windows, considering where the hawk may come from, and beware lest he deceive you.

Therefore, feed your sheep in the gentleness of correction, for the day of salvation does not flee from you, and you are not yet ashes. Be also a mirror of life in the eyes of life.

Letter 67: R67: Abt A. von St. Emmeram in Regensburg to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

To Hildegard from the Administrator of Saint Emmeram,

To the most devout servant of Christ, Hildegard, A., the unworthy administrator of the monastery of Saint Emmeram in Regensburg, perseverance in all good things granted by the Father of Lights.

We give thanks to our Lord God who has wondrously adorned His church by giving you to it. For through you, all the righteous greatly glory and those who have hitherto despaired are joyfully comforted, because they hope to be reconciled to Christ through you. Hence, the bearer of this present letter, as he asserts, despairing of his own salvation, recently complained to me of his miseries, beseeching that I send him to the presence of your blessedness with letters of recommendation.

Therefore, O servant of Christ, I commend him to your piety and compassion, humbly asking that for the love of Almighty God, you labor with all your might for his salvation, along with all those obedient to you. Moreover, O beloved of God, I supplicate your kindness to commend me and all those entrusted to me to Christ with your constant prayers, who is the rewarder and reward of His saints' labors. Amen.

Farewell.

Letter 68: R68: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Abt A. von St. Emmeram in Regensburg

Hildegard,

He who is says: O man, you must look everywhere to drive away the attackers of your sheep. Be sure to inspect the scars of their wounds as well, for many clouds surround the spiritual people. These clouds are full of vices. When the devil sees these, he quickly sends his persuasion with derision to that person and stirs him everywhere with flying darts in various ways.

These clouds are troubles and unbelief in vices, which bring punishment and not feasts, for where these are, there is sadness, rare victory, and dry veins in those people as they seek out their sins in the unrest of their minds, always looking at their misfortune as if they cannot be saved, contradicting even the glory of God. Not as if God does not exist, but a certain cloud comprehends their knowledge, suggesting these things with deceitful words. But they, resisting, know that it is not so, but only perceive it thus in their knowledge, like the ear of a man captures the most shameful words, which he knows to be evil. These punishments often make martyrs where a man does not complete their vices in deeds.

Now, O you man, who are placed in watch over your sheep, look with the eye of your knowledge where these clouds are in your fold, and anoint with mercy and consolation those men laboring in these punishments. But correct feasting sins with the rod of discipline, lest they go into the pit. For in your conscience shines the light of the sword, but still, there are whirlwinds in your manners. You, however, look to the true light, and you will live.

Letter 69: R69: Abt E. von Neuenburg to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

To Hildegard from the Abbot of Nuenburg,

To the most blessed Hildegard, a consecrated woman, E., by name only the abbot of the brothers of Nuenburg, whatever the affection of both men can wish.

Because the fame of your holiness has spread to the ears of all with sweet rumor, it has most ardently provoked our spirit to see your face. Thus, last summer, I gathered provisions for the journey and was about to set out to you, but, frightened by the tempests of the wars then imminent, I did not dare to go. However, I sent a messenger with letters to you, from whom I have not yet received any response. Lest this has happened due to the neglect of the messenger, I will reiterate the contents again.

First, I give thanks from the bottom of my heart for the fellowship of fraternity received from you. Then, I earnestly ask to be helped by your prayers amid the present dangers, for being placed in governance, I am driven by the tempests of worldly affairs. I flee to the port of your sanctity and prayer, so that in all things and above all, I do not succumb to sin. And although I earnestly seek this, I especially implore through your prayers that I may be saved by the Lord both in body and spirit, once the course of life is completed.

Among these pressures, one is more pressing than the others, for which I ask you more earnestly to beseech the Lord. Send some token of salvation through which I may be able to prosper and have a memory of you, through the bearer of this present letter. The desire to come to you will not be lacking in me until, if life permits, I fulfill it in action.

Farewell.

Letter 70: R70: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Abt E. von Neuenburg

Reply of Hildegard.

Your mind is like one that possesses the fixing of lights, and it distributes them here and there. But it is often disturbed by the whirlwind and the blackness of fire and clouds of water until the sun, through its fiery sphere, pierces through everything. You have weariness through doubt and do not wish to labor due to the various wars of human morals. For a new soldier rejoices when he carries arms because he is named a soldier in the greatest strength when his enemies battle against him. But if he says he cannot overcome his enemies and casts away his arms, he is called foolish because of the derision of men, for his arms do not shine in the courage of battle.

You, master, call yourself naked, like a snake lying in holes, when you do not contend to overcome the variety of human tempests with armor. But it shall not be so. For in the first age, the Lord appointed stewards and overseers in all possessions, to give an account to Him. When the steward receives gifts, he gathers arms and arrows to himself—in arms, namely the zealous scriptures, and in arrows, the impious and deceitful and thieves by filling them with the parables of other scriptures.

But if, in the meantime, a great tempest with the blackness of fire and water and anger and oblivion and transgression of God's precepts arises, let him yield until that tempest is mitigated, and apply the medicine with the sun of the scriptures as it is written, "For I desire mercy and not sacrifice." Mercy demands prayer, which God loves, and which the Holy Spirit makes fiery among us and you, so that He may lead us into the heavenly Jerusalem. Amen.

Letter 71: R71: Abt H. von St. Maria to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

To Hildegard from the Abbot of Saint Mary's,

To his lady Hildegard, shining with the honor of holy religion, H., called abbot of Saint Mary's without worth, the duty of prayers and supplications, and the holy affection of due service.

We would rather speak to you in person than write to you in absence, if either time allowed us or the distance of the journey did not oppose our will. Indeed, we have sometimes had the brief opportunity to converse with your holiness, and therefore we would frequently wish to hear you, because whatever we heard then pleased us. On this occasion, however, we have conceived the confidence to write to you because the bearer of this present letter, beloved by us both in Christ, has commended your blessedness to our poor prayers while staying with us, just as he has done in many monasteries, and has asserted that he requests this on our behalf.

Therefore, we humbly supplicate with humbled heart and body that, although we are nothing and do nothing, we may and will continue to deserve your intercessions for us and all our people. Through Him to whom you devoutly live, from whom you have received the pledge of the Spirit, we seek this singular and secret favor from you: that through your familiarity with obtaining from the Lord, you may strive to learn whether among the other charisms of revelations, He may deign to reveal to you our condition of humility. Namely, whether in this office of honor and burden, of leadership and danger, He provides for the salvation of my soul, or whether He foresees it would be beneficial for me to be released from this office. If you receive any revelation concerning this matter, please console our distress through the bearer of this letter by writing it down.

For we thirst for your welfare, as we have said, and we hope that the Lord will provide you with the growth of necessary humility amid the greatness of your revelations, so that the lamp you have received lit from heaven may shine to men in such a way that, with the unfailing oil of Christ, whom you await, you may meet Him when He comes in glory.

Letter 72: R72: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Abt H. von St. Maria

Reply of Hildegard.

In the mirror of true vision, I saw you greatly troubled, like a mixed cloud when a perilous air is moved by an intertwined wind of a great pouring rain. Thus are your thoughts through your restless mind in this matter which you have embraced in the midst of your heart. And I heard a voice concerning you saying:

"A man who labors with a plow and oxen in arid land says to himself, 'I cannot endure this great labor because it is hard for me.' And so he goes to watery places where, nevertheless, there are soft flowers growing without the labor of men, which are also suffocated by useless herbs, and says, 'I will leave the plow and remove these useless herbs.' What utility is in this?"

Now you, man, see whether he is more worthy who labors with the utility of the plow in the land, or with the eradication of useless herbs among the flowers. But I have seen that this matter you inquire about is useless for you. Therefore, restrain yourself with your office, having taken up the plow. May God help you in all your needs and not allow you to labor uselessly.

Letter 73: R73: Kuno von Disibodenberg to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

To Hildegard from the Abbot of Saint Disibod,

Cuno, the unworthy abbot of the Mount of Saint Disibod, to Hildegard, his most beloved lady and mother from the Mount of Saint Robert, the grace of God be with you.

Because I have been hindered here and there by various occupations for some time, I have been unable to visit, greet, and speak with you. Now, having received an opportune moment of time, I commit myself more attentively to your prayers, recognizing, to my great sorrow, that I am becoming more deeply entrenched in increasing sin rather than in any progress of justice. But since your holiness sees many secrets in the spirit through Him who neither deceives nor is deceived, I ask that if God reveals anything to you about our patron, the blessed Disibod, you share it with me, so that I may immediately offer the most devoted praises with my brothers for this.

And because I cannot, with any effort of my own, shake off the negligence that is in me, I earnestly seek both your help and that of the other daughters of God who live with you. Not only do I commend my insignificant self to your prayers, but also the brothers entrusted to me and our place, to the prayers of all of you, just as I often do with my living voice when I am among you.

Letter 74: R74: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Kuno von Disibodenberg

Response of Hildegard.

Oh, great foolishness is in that man who does not correct himself but seeks what is in another's bosom. And those crimes which he finds in it he does not conceal as flowing waters in a torrent. Whoever does this, let him hear this response from God. Oh man, why do you sleep in the sound of tasting good works that resound before God like a symphony? And why do you not deny the wantonness of lust through the scrutiny of the house of your heart? But you strike me on my cheeks when you reject my members in their wounds! Where do you not look at me, bringing the wandering sheep back to the flock? And therefore from the house of your heart you will answer me, and from the city which I made and washed in the blood of the Lamb. And why do you not fear to break a man whom you did not create? You do not anoint him so that you neither guide nor conceal him! but in excess, you correct him. Now the time of your ending is near, but God who created you does not wish to destroy you. Therefore understand these things.

But what you, oh father, asked that I write to you if I saw and understood anything about blessed Dysibodus under whose patronage you are, I heard, saw, and understood these things about him in a vision of the spirit, according to this manner. Oh wonder to be admired, that a hidden form excels lofty in honest stature! where the living height brings forth the mystical. Therefore, oh Dysibodus, you rise in the end, with the flower of all branches of the world, as you first arose. And oh greenness of the finger of God in which God established a plantation that shines in the height like a standing column! you are glorious in the preparation of God. And oh height of the mountain that will never be dissipated in the judgment of God! you still stand afar as an exile. but it is not in the power of the

armed one to seize you. But also, oh prelate of the true city who in the temple of the cornerstone ascending into heaven, you were prostrated on earth for God. you, a pilgrim from the seed of the world, desired to become an exile for the love of Christ. Oh mountain of a closed mind! you continuously opened the beautiful face in the mirror of the dove. You hid in the hidden, intoxicated with the scent of flowers! shining to God through the lattice of the saints. Oh pinnacle in the keys of heaven, which for the clear life of the world you sold! this contest, kind confessor always holding in the Lord. In your mind indeed! a living fountain brought forth the purest streams with the brightest light through the way of salvation. You are a great tower before the altar of the highest God! and the summit of this tower you overshadowed through the fragrant smoke. Oh Dysibodus! in your light, through examples of pure sound, you have built the members of miraculous praise in two parts through the Son of Man. In the height you stand unashamed before the living God! and you protect with green dew those praising God with this voice. Oh sweet life and oh blessed perseverance! which in this blessed Dysibodus you have always built a glorious light in the heavenly Jerusalem. Now let there be praise to God in the form of a beautiful tonsure, acting manfully! and let the citizens of heaven rejoice over those who imitate them in this way. But you, oh father, who requested these poor words from me, make yourself in the sight of God such that when your time in this world fails you, your time in eternity may be happily prolonged! so that you may appear in the salvation of the righteous.

Letter 75: R75: Helenger von Disibodenberg to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Helenger, abbot of Saint Dysibodus, to Hildegard.

To Hildegard, my beloved mother, to be embraced above all value!
Helenger, her son and caretaker of the flock of the blessed
Dysibodus, alas, not in deed but in name only. Whatever is better in
temporal good. Since the whole world proclaims with true praise
that you are endowed with the Holy Spirit in jubilation, I, who ought
to have been first and to invite others to your blessedness, have thus
far languished in idle tedium! But now, at last, corrected by fear and
shame, I have considered it necessary to greet you with these words.
For those whom I ought to benefit, I strive rather to preside over,
seeking what is mine, not what is theirs. Yet I have borne the burden
of the day and heat in the vineyard of the Lord, although
lukewarmly, and with God's help, I have resolved to persevere until I
someday receive the denarius.

But now, my mother, at the Lord's wedding, the spiritual wine has
entirely failed, because the fervor of monastic religion has nearly
vanished. For the mother of Jesus is not there, nor is Jesus himself,
nor are his disciples called upon. And therefore, all adversities are
advancing against us. Therefore, there is no need to drag you with
lengthy verbosity, especially since I am unskilled in speech and
knowledge. I know, my mother, I know, that from the sole of my
foot to the top of my head there is no goodness in me. Therefore,
send the writings of your consolation to my humility, so that your
name may have a place in Zion in the book of eternal life. Farewell.

Letter 76: R76: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Helenger von Disibodenberg

Response of Hildegard.

In the spiritual vision which is from God, I heard these words: It is very necessary for a person who wants to find their soul in its desires to cast off the evil works of the flesh and to have the blessed knowledge of how to live, so that the soul may be the mistress and the flesh the servant, as the psalmist says, "Blessed is the man whom you instruct, O Lord, and teach out of your law." And who is this man? Namely, he who treats his body as a servant and his soul as his most beloved mistress. For even he who is fierce in wickedness, like a bear, and rejects that fierceness, yearning for the sun of justice, who is pious and merciful, pleases God, so that He places him above His precepts, giving him a rod of iron to lead His sheep to the mountain of myrrh.

Now listen and learn, so that you may be ashamed in your soul's taste regarding these matters, because sometimes you possess the manners of a bear that murmurs secretly within itself. At other times, you have the manners of a donkey, because you are not diligent in your own causes but tedious, and also useless in some other matters. Therefore, you do not fulfill the malice of a bear in wickedness. Sometimes you have the manners of certain birds that are neither from the higher nor the lower realms, so that the higher ones prevail over them, and the lower ones cannot harm them. To such manners, a noble father responds, "Ha ha. I did not want this vicissitude of your manners, so that your mind would murmur about my justice, and so that you do not seek a true answer about it but hide some murmuring within yourself according to the murmuring of a bear."

When you have good understanding in you, you pray a little, and again you fall into tedium and do not complete your prayer, but you

willingly follow the way that your body perceives, and you do not cut it off entirely from yourself. Yet your desires sometimes ascend to me in some part that is not entirely holy in work but merely lying as if in the appearance of faith. However, sometimes I chose such people from the vicissitude of their manners to hear the sound of their understanding, to see what they considered within themselves, where they were nevertheless found useless and fell.

Now, however, let your mind not ridicule the work that God has made because you do not know when He will strike you with His sword. But I, poor little one, see in you the blackest fire kindled against us, but forget this in good knowledge, lest the grace of God and His blessing depart from you in the time of your office.

Therefore, love the justice of God so that you may be loved by God, and faithfully believe in His wonders so that you may receive eternal rewards.

Letter 77: R77: Abt H. von Kempten to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

The Abbot of the Church of Campidona to Hildegard.

To Hildegard, the bride of Christ, yet the servant of God and accepted by men, H., in name only the Abbot of the Church of Campidona, devoutly with constant prayerful service. Blessed be God, whose Spirit blows where it wills and who is accustomed to fill and enrich the innermost parts of your heart with the sweetness of heavenly harmony, making you exceedingly marvelous and venerable to both men and women.

Indeed, the reputation of your holiness has now spread far and wide, as it is easily recognized that the Mighty One has done great things for you. It is not doubted that He has regarded you, a humble servant, while He takes care to instill unheard-of things to all through you. Already, the heavenly King has taken you, holding you by the hand as His bride, and led you into His chamber, where, leaning on your beloved, you have deserved to hear His secrets and to excellently proclaim them to mortals.

These things are fitting for your sanctity, as we have learned by report that you have heard from the cradle of your infancy. “Hear, O daughter, and see,” and so forth. And we, “How much we have heard and known.” And this, “As we have heard, so we have seen.” Therefore, in order that He who has begun His strength in you may perfect it, we seek with all our prayers that you also may take care to intercede for our sins and humbly ask you to reveal to us something divinely disclosed to you about our state and that of our church.

Letter 78: R78: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Abt H. von Kempten

Response of Hildegard.

O man, turn away from evil and do good, for a person always has within themselves the propensity to err in mind and to set for themselves a goal that they never truly achieve. Just as Adam did not see what he was doing, desiring to be like God, but he did not have the evil to envy God's honor and power. O sons of God, cut off any storm by faith. For Adam believed that he could share in power and honor with God, which was great vanity, and yet he knew that God was supreme. So it is with every person, to know that they have God as their Creator and Redeemer, and thus flee to God, for they know by faith that He is God, as it is written, "All nations you have made will come and worship before you, O Lord, and will glorify your name." This means that a person who was made with the creatures knows that they have God, and therefore should be in good faith, diligently seek and worship Him, and glorify His name.

It is for every person to turn away from the evil of doubting that God, who created them, exists! But to love Him who created and redeemed them, and in Him to love their neighbor who does good to them. Do not imitate the devil, who hated his Creator, who granted him many good things. The devil did not acknowledge God through love, and therefore he does not seek liberation from Him, but he knows that God is above him. However, Adam did not reject God in this hostile part but sought His likeness in great vanity. The devil did not find the hatred with which he hates God in Adam, but he deceived him with his counsel, and thus he surrounds his faith with a thousand of his arts.

With his thousand arts, he prevents good in people, for when a person strives to do good, he sends his darts at them. When they

desire to embrace God with their whole heart in love, he flies to them with harmful disturbance so that this may not be right before God! And when they seek the greenness of virtues, he says to them in his suggestion that they do not know what they are doing, teaching them to set a law for themselves according to their own way, which he knows well. Against these is the battle, as it is written, "A thousand shields hang on it, all the armor of the mighty." This means that the first shield is the confession of sins, which the old law did not have, and thus it was blind, and repentance after the confession of sins, as the good shepherd commands. The cloak of the old law's nakedness is penitence, and thus the neck of David's tower is exalted in the humanity of the Savior from which hangs all the armor of the mighty, which are those who live well in conjunction with the commandment of the law, and the continent and virgins who hang from this tower. All these things the old law foretold, and Christ showed in His incarnation, and after His ascension, He will fulfill them through His disciples and those who follow them until the last day.

These are the thousand shields that hang on it, with which the battle against the ancient serpent who seduced the first man and others is fought. When a person stands in the midst of their enemies, they defend themselves with these and fight everywhere so that they may not be killed by their enemies! As the bridegroom says to the bride in the songs, "My head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night." This means that Christ Jesus, who is the head of all, has men attached to Him like hairs, who are filled with the offenses and sinful acts of the flesh, whom the Church regenerates anew and purifies from the unclean stench of the dust of sins through repentance and confession, just as hairs are shaken and loosened from dew and drops. Just as wool is shaken and cleansed from dust. So, dear son of God, do this, because you will live

forever and because you will be a stone in the heavenly Jerusalem,
therefore you must also be sharply polished.

Letter 79: R79: Adalbert von Ellwangen to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

To Hildegard, beloved bride of Christ, from the abbot of Ellwangen, also known as Eluacensis by name only. After the valley of tears, we gladly extend to your blessedness the duty of greeting, separated by such a vast distance of lands, embracing in you the great deeds of God, who has made you shine with the sanctity of a purer life and has endowed you with the spirit of prophecy beyond all opinion, enabling you to touch the present, recall the past, and foresee the future. Thus, doubly honored by the novelty of divine gift, you are truly to be marveled at and venerated by the people of this time.

For the rising dawn has visited us and has extended his hand to the falling world, who has given such a great and wonderful light to shine brightly in this age amidst the clouds of this wicked world. By whose intervention, we rejoice in obtaining the forgiveness of sins, the remedy for labors, the consolation of sorrows, and in knowing the secret of divine disposition.

Our conscience accuses us and our guilt terrifies us! Sins condemn us. We are troubled within! We are endangered without. Nowhere is there security for us! The enemy surrounds us from all sides. A deceitful friend lurks on the right, a fierce enemy attacks on the left. Regarding these and other matters about which our messengers have consulted your motherhood, consult the divine oracle! And whatever we should expect from the mercy of God, most holy mother, please write back to us.

Letter 80: R80: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Adalbert von Ellwangen

Response of Hildegard.

He who sees and is not changed by circumstances says: You, man, do not yet have the wings for flying that endure storms and pertain to the proper moderation of the air! But you are like a pillar in the street without the tools of a building and standing without the ascent of a ladder, so that you are spattered by the mud of the street. For you are gentle and not sharp in the eye of correction to rebuke the depraved and dark behaviors of men. But the grace of God looks upon you who do not have the closure of a hardened heart, but only sleep in the torpor of wantonness, so that you do not attend to God.

Therefore, do not have your lord like a steward, but look to Him in probity like a valiant soldier fighting most strongly, armed with breastplate and helmet. For now, the times are as if in forgetfulness of God and weary in the struggle of Christ! But rumor flies in lies through the vicissitude of vanities as if they see God! But yet they do not know Him. Where then is the man who walks in the right way? There are few. But He who is says: No man can hastily draw the sword of my vengeance from its sheath through the vomit of his prattle before the time of my will comes in vengeance.

Therefore, you, O man, rise and clarify your mind in me! So that you may vigilantly seek where you may find me and live.

Letter 81: R81: Abt H. von Maulbronn to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

To Hildegard,

From Heb, Abbot of Mühlenbrunnen.

To Hildegard, spiritual mother and venerable sister, H. the abbot by name of Mühlenbrunnen, may I deserve eternal salvation from the Lord. We have heard good things about you, O servant of Christ, and we have heard and rendered thanks to the giver of all good things. Therefore, I, insignificant as I am, but not without hope of being heard, send these writings to you and seek some special help from your prayers.

Having a difficult and anxious responsibility, namely the care of souls, I ask, seek, and knock, to be aided by the Lord through you, with a favorable outcome. It should not be burdensome or unworthy for you to send me a reply to this letter, by which my body and soul may be instructed, strengthened, and consoled. Farewell.

Letter 82: R82: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Abt H. von Maulbronn

Response of Hildegard.

A wise man of true light says: O man! These words must be heard. A man who wishes to pass into life must have the contemplative vision of the eyes of the living soul, because God watches over such deeds. For when the devastating flood of ashy cause comes, spewing forth various crimes, then man must bridle the taste of his mind and waste away in the unbearable act of hardness, rising towards the dawn of light, which is mercy that has overthrown death and crushed the foul entrails of hell! Where this same mercy has wiped away the crimes of men. Thus, man must have windows to restore himself in goodness.

But you, who are noble in your will, pay attention because many rivers are flooding within you, quarreling with great noise. O strong bond! Twist the teats of pleasures sprouting from vices. Also, stand as an example of the turtledove, bending your knees when you overcome yourself. O living figure, open the closure of your mind in a beautiful face, which is fitting for you in the sight of the highest King. Beware also that you are not vehement lead because of the hardness of your mouth, if you have not anointed the wounds of the painful scars.

Kiss God in your mind, and let your desires not be ashamed to fulfill good and just works in their good will. Now let there be refreshment in your labor and bridle secular causes within you, and make the face of your soul beautiful! So that the windows of the heavenly Jerusalem may receive you. God will not abandon you, but will give you the refreshment of salvation.

Letter 83: R83: Abt B. von Michaelsberg to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

To Hildegard,

From the Abbot of Saint Michael in Babenberg.

To Lady Hildegard, betrothed to the highest King, and to the mistress of the sisters of Saint Robert, B., an unworthy abbot of Saint Michael in Babenberg, whatever is of value in prayer and devotion, we hear that you are fervent in the love of Him who redeemed us with His own blood. We earnestly implore, according to our modest means, that He may perpetually preserve the gifts bestowed upon you.

We desire greatly with our hearts to see you in person! But due to the obstacles of our sins, we have not been able to achieve this thus far. Therefore, through Him whom you love, we most intimately beseech your sweetness to implore the Lord's mercy for me, that the scourge of His mercy with which He has touched me and touches me daily may be tempered in such a way that I may find health here and, in the future, merit to find mercy and grace.

Should divine predestination, as I hope, deem it near to call me from these shadows, I wish to commend my soul to your hands and prayers. Please send writings of your consolation through the present messenger to us.

Letter 84: R84: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Abt B. von Michaelsberg

Response of Hildegard.

In the fiery admonition, it is predestined that this people will hear with a living voice, which will be drawn from the torrent of stone in the obscurity of the mysteries of God. For I see you sometimes in your intention like a glowing dawn, but nevertheless, you have labor and anguish at times, both in yourself and in others, so that you become so wearied by it as if you do not know what you can do.

Now, however, listen to the most noble head of the household admonishing you. Be vigilant, strive diligently, and rise in the light, so that you may bear his rod honorably in the day. For if the outer man is sometimes fatigued by the scourge of God, the inner man rises all the stronger from the strongest strength, which wants to sustain you in the revolving wheel of His grace.

Letter 85: R85: Berthold von Zwiefalten to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

To Hildegard,

From the Abbot of Zwiefalten.

To Hildegard, servant of God from the Mount of Saint Robert in Rupertsberg! B., Abbot of Zwiefalten, by name only, dust and ashes! Whatever a sinner's prayer can achieve. Desiring for a long time to converse with you, I wished to make a cry from mouth to mouth to you about the injuries and tribulations that cruel persecutors inflict upon me while striving to reduce me to nothing.

For although I have often been made happier by the consolations of your words, their obscurities, because they were not fully apparent to my understanding, have made me sadder. Therefore, sending a messenger to you with tearful and pitiable requests, I implore your ears to inquire of the will of God regarding the anxieties that beset us according to the capacity of my little intellect and send me some comfort through letters. For I greatly fear that my mind may be scattered by the storm of unusual tribulation and that it may sink into the depths of despair.

Letter 86: R86: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Berthold von Zwiefalten

Response of Hildegard.

The living light says: I saw a certain man whom I left as if weak and lame in the excellence of mastery. How? Those who in the weakness of their flesh were like naked shipwrecked rebels, he fled because of the fear of war. But now I see him as a humble and tearful pilgrim. Therefore, I look upon him as a son of inheritance beaten with a rod because of the unrest of his mind's habits. However, I wish to restore him to the original Church as a fortunate man, when the mountain is submerged in the bull. Now live forever.

Letter 87: R87: Abt G. von Salem to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

To Hildegard,

From the Abbot in Salem.

To my most beloved lady and mother in Christ, Hildegard, an unworthy servant. G., minister of the brothers in Salem, if the prayer of a sinner has any power. Anyone who loves Christ also has the Spirit of Christ! And no one can say "Lord Jesus" except in the Holy Spirit. But you, sweetest mother, endowed with the special gift of the Holy Spirit among the other members of Christ, have been sent to visit the end of this world. For the Holy Spirit truly speaking through you and in you, as in His instrument, is clearly recognized and revealed.

Indeed, I have seen and read the greatest sacraments of the mysteries of God, which through you in the book written by you, the Lord of knowledge has reserved and revealed to unworthy men. Therefore, I believe and most certainly know that the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from God the Father and the Son, against the spirit of lies who is soon to come from the father of the devil, shines through you by speaking and flashes by shining.

With you, therefore, as with the bride and servant of Christ and the confidant of God's secrets, I humbly and simply seek the will of your opinion for the anxiety of my heart, if this desire and affection is not against His will. By the common counsel of the brothers of Salem, upon the death of the abbot of this house, I have been elected as father, although for many years I had administered the same pastoral care, albeit uselessly, in Reitheinhaselin. God, who knows the hidden things, knows that I have always had and still have this administration entirely unwillingly.

Therefore, I ask that you kindly reveal to me the will of the Holy Spirit in this matter, whether it is safer and more salutary to relinquish this burden, or if it is not, let me deserve to know through you. Whatever you decide, may the sealed letter sent by the bearers of this letter convey it to me. Farewell, my lady, in the Lord.

Letter 88: R88: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Abt G. von Salem

Response of Hildegard.

Whoever has taken on the field or flock for the sake of faithful stewardship should not abandon it but should manage it as the head of a household. For whoever leaves his own flock and takes on another is called a transgressor of God's commandments. You, however, as a shepherd, according to the piety of the Father and the care of the shepherd, should have the rod of correction. A shepherd should also not make himself a thief. How? A thief takes what he wants and leaves what he does not want. Similarly, many shepherds choose according to their own will what they want and reject what they do not want. Often they also disdain perfect disciples and seek out the wayward and the vain. A loving father, in all affection, corrects his son and does not withhold what is good for him.

In your congregation, I see some shining through good works and patience like the dawn, but I perceive the greater part as cloudy and vain due to the vicissitudes of their behavior and their boldness in excusing their own words. Admonish and correct these as much as you can. For God has chosen the Old and New Testaments and left them to His children so that they might be taught to live rightly through the Holy Spirit. God wants you, so see to it that you do not depart from Him.

Letter 89: R89: Bertulf von St. Eucharius in Trier to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

To Hildegard,

From the Abbot of Saint Eucharius.

To Hildegard, the radiant pearl. B., poor servant of Christ and unworthy abbot of Saint Eucharius, striving to please the Bridegroom of virgins through the vow of virginity. We have heard and learned of the fame of your virtue, indeed the virtue that works in your earthen vessel through divine piety! We have heard and learned, and immediately recognized in you the fulfillment of the prophetic saying: "It is good for a man to bear the yoke," and so on. Truly, you have exceeded us greatly, for what we fear to undertake, you have courageously surpassed and made habitual, so that you can say with the apostle, "Our conversation is in heaven."

Although we, hindered by the fluctuations of the tumultuous world, have long delayed sending our greetings to your sanctity through our messengers, the fire of charity that once began to burn in our hearts towards you has in no way cooled. Therefore, may your blessedness always remember my smallness before Him with whom you are one spirit, and constantly remind the sisters entrusted to you to intercede for us and our place. We also desire your admonitory words and wish with all our hearts that you always fare well. Farewell.

Letter 90: R90: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Bertulf von St. Eucharius in Trier

Response of Hildegard.

He who is says: O man! You are clothed with the breastplate of faith and girded with the belt of holiness, like a man who sees his face in a mirror, not having full joy in this because sometimes he doubts whether his face is beautiful or not. For your mind is like a building that you see from afar, sometimes covered by fog. You are also precipitous like a burden carried by a porter to market. Therefore, consider whether an ox or a donkey is more useful, whether green land or arid, a noun or a pronoun, a mountain or a valley, among the enemies of man. For a good teacher is much more useful than the rest of the crowd, just as the air is useful, producing various fruits with its wings.

For the works of man are worth little without the providence of a master. Take care that you do not waste away in your leadership as long as you have even one eye in yourself, but give light to those under your care with motherly sweetness, and wash their wounds without the infamy of tyranny! For a good physician anoints the wounds of men with mercy and does not delay in this. For he gave a kiss to his own sheep and washed her in his own blood.

You, therefore, O man, place mercy, that beautiful friend of the King, in the chamber of your mind, and clothe yourself with holiness like purple and like a crown of glory. Also, gather the sweetest aromas into your bosom, and you will live forever like a mountain of myrrh and incense. Be vigilant, therefore, carrying your burdens with the key of remuneration, so that when the sun shines over all without the whirlwind of various storms, you may appear there usefully.

Letter 91: R91: Ludwig von St. Eucharius in Trier to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Ludevvicus, Abbot of Saint Eucharius, to Hildegard, a saintly and God-dedicated virgin, his beloved mother! Ludovvicus, abbot in name only, of Saint Eucharius, sends his greetings and the affection of such great devotion that if anyone besides me knew of it, either they would know nothing or they would know things that are unknowable. It would seem quite ridiculous if eagles sent letters greeting butterflies, if stags sent letters greeting fleas, or if lions sent letters greeting worms. So it is even more wondrous, or to speak more truthfully, laughable, that a sinner, with little or no worth in divine or human arts, presumes to write to her whom God, with a marvelous prerogative of chastity, has made so exalted and distinguished with the excellence of her remarkable intellect, that you surpass not only the sharpness of philosophers and dialecticians but also that of the ancient prophets. Nevertheless, my most pious mother, you will not deny your usual kindness to this rash presumption! Since the cause of writing back has been the audacity of familiarity. But the difficulty of the journey will not deter me from writing to you and often coming to you! While the usefulness of your words invites me! So much the more grateful, the greater the effort with which they were obtained. For we possess more gratefully what we acquire with labor. Therefore, our lady, let not my impudence move you! Because the strength that the infirmity of the body denies you, compassionate charity will administer. I await with great desire the letters promised by you! Which, through the bearer of this present letter, you should not delay to send. And also, whatever you deem appropriate regarding the business committed to you, you should write back.

Letter 92: R92: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Ludwig von St. Eucharius in Trier

Response of Hildegard.

In a true vision, I saw and heard this: A certain man was diligently tending a garden, but a cloud came and dried it out, and the man left the garden uncultivated. Later, he overturned the garden by digging and planted roses, lilies, and other good aromatic plants in it. But again, the flowers of these herbs were disturbed by an incoming storm. Then the same man said to himself, "I will make a field out of this garden, in which I will sow wheat and barley."

Now, you who are called Father, listen. This garden was your beginning, which was at first somewhat nebulous due to various changes, but later, through the admonition of the Holy Spirit, you turned it to a better state and delighted in the Holy Spirit as in good herbs. However, weariness sometimes fatigued you, as the storm bends the flowers. Now it has pleased God to appoint you as a farmer, so that you may look around with great diligence everywhere and place the plow rightly into the ground, for it will not benefit you to be torpid with weariness.

You will do these things according to the examples of the saints, and you will learn the ways of a pious father from their customs. Love the good and the righteous, but correct the vain and the delinquent, and patiently endure those who are as hard as stones. Do not fall upon them with hardness or with the force of anger like the north wind, but do everything with moderation. Do so, lest you scatter the flock of Christ.

Restrain yourself and live according to the rule of the most learned master, and be instructed by the strongest man who brought forth waters and divided them into streams, who makes the earth sprout and bloom with fruit-bearing trees, who exalted the mountains and

placed them over the valleys, who established the firmament with all its ornaments, who brought forth winds to blow, and fire to fly with the air. This man is also blessed, for all blessedness proceeds from him! He is called a man because he created everything and brought forth everything that is virtuous and strong with manly vigor.

Therefore, imbue your mind with the streams of the waters of Scripture and the conversation of the saints and how they lived. Prohibit your body from indulging in the riches of the devil, but make virtues germinate through good teaching. Ascend the mountain of virtues, and do this with humility, and bring forth flowers in your brothers as from trees. Be also a sun through teaching, a moon through discernment, a wind through strenuous mastery, air through gentleness, and fire through the beautiful discourse of doctrine. Begin these things in the beautiful dawn, and perfect them in the radiant light. Persevere in them diligently so that you may live forever.

Letter 93: R93: Abt W. von Bouzonville to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Abbot of Bouzonville to Hildegard.

By the grace of God, although unworthy, the abbot of Bosons Villa sends to his most beloved and God-dedicated virgin, Hildegard, that which is most felicitous in eternal life. Since in the storms of tribulations, the grace of God has granted you a safe harbor for all who take refuge in you, we too, in our peril, do not hesitate to extend our suppliant hands to you.

Therefore, by this letter of caution, we inform you that our church, which by God's mercy has been held in great honor for many years, has now, due to our sins, been tainted by a detestable rumor of infamy. For some of our own, instigators of evil, incited by the devil who is always hostile to good, do not cease to burden our house and our entire convent with whatever disturbance they can. To sum it all up, their unrestrained arrogance has caused everyone to declare that our hidden sins are now apparent.

Bearing the burden of such oppression for the sake of alleviation, we humbly ask that you write us some word of consolation on this matter! And above all, we earnestly ask that with your prayers, you reconcile us to God and men. Farewell.

Letter 94: R94: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Abt W. von Bouzonville

Response of Hildegard.

In the vision which my soul frequently sees while awake, I perceive a storm in your place, as if in some vicissitude of a cloud that is both glowing and black and turbulent, and I see the place greatly disturbed. But in your soul, I see three colors: the first in the blackness of malice and anger, the second in the smoke of useless pursuits, and the third in the likeness of a glowing dawn of benevolence and a sigh aspiring to God. Moreover, I see a glorious light rising in some people of your community, through which God sustains that place with His help.

But you, worthy shepherd, look upon that field which is blessed by God in the fullness of its fruits, and upon which a black cloud has come, greatly harming it and making its fruit worse than before. This is the tedium and malice that are in the heart of one who knows good and can accomplish it, but occupies his mind with both tedium and malice, thus being impeded from good work. Flee these things, son of God, and work in the fruitful field with the fire of the Holy Spirit before that day comes when you can no longer work.

Letter 95: R95: Abt A. von St. Martin in Köln to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Abbot of Saint Martin in Cologne to Hildegard.

To the God-beloved Lady Hildegard, from A., a humble minister of Saint Martin in Cologne, may you possess paradise after the course of this present life, with eternal happiness. Lady, lady, believed to be truly loved and blessed by God! All the works that divine virtue performs through you, I know to be true and holy. Nor am I mistaken in believing that whatever you ask of God, you can obtain, as faithful men attest who have proven this in truth.

Therefore, I, too, with as much boldness as I dare, ask your holiness to implore God's clemency for me, a sinner, that He may deign to grant me some solace of consolation, for I am greatly troubled and laboring in miseries. My spirit is inexpressibly anguished within me, and my heart is troubled within me, due to those things which, alas, my sins have caused me to suffer for many years and now most intensely, known only to God, in whose eyes all things are bare and open.

And because what I feel is known only to God, it certainly would not be believed by any mortal if related, as it would be heard by one who is untested and is outside the realm of faith. Therefore, by the grace of your cooperating and protecting Holy Spirit, I beseech you to make known to me, through whatever revelation He grants you, any hope He may show concerning me. Let everything be committed to writing as it truly is and be communicated through this most reverend abbot, as he has promised.

Lady, venerable in Christ, I wish I could have come to the presence of your holiness, as I have desired, and speak with you face to face. Without a doubt, I would believe that everything hidden from the knowledge of all could be explained to you in detail. What then? I

know, as Scripture teaches and the Christian faith holds, that no one in the flesh should despair of God's mercy. Led by this hope, and especially knowing that God is manifestly with you, I have presumed to relate to you in these writings the causes of my miseries, not uncertain that I will somehow be consoled by you, which I earnestly pray for, if possible. May your Bridegroom, Christ, hold you steadfastly in His embrace.

Letter 96: R96: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Abt A. von St. Martin in Köln

Response of Hildegard.

From the living light, I heard these words: You are like the smith who casts many vessels, but does not make them shine through fire. Learn from this that your works should not lack the brilliance of charity but should be surrounded with discernment so that each of your works may be reasonable. And let these be done in abstinence, prayer, and the good customs of the saints, who emanated like streams from the living fountain and gave food to men that they could swallow with joy

If thistles are given instead of bread, they cannot be eaten; likewise, if harsh words are spoken by teachers to their disciples, they do not edify them but lead them into error. A teacher should sift the words of his doctrine with maternal sweetness so that the disciples may joyfully open their mouths and swallow them. A mill grinds grain and divides it into many varieties; similarly, the planters of the church took the legal precepts from the old and new law. The old law prophesied the coming birth of Christ the Lord, but Christ Himself sent His word into all the earth by preaching.

The old law is the mill that in Christ produced all the grain of truth, and the pure flour that is sifted from all impurities is virginity, which is the material of all spiritual life in the church, and this gives birth to the offspring of obedience. Therefore, obedient children are the kiss of Christ's mouth. A teacher should embrace obedient disciples with the affection of charity and not in the offense of anger, because they are the kiss of God and must be fed with the bread of pure flour. But disobedient children should be given coarse flour, that is, harsh correction. And to those who completely abandon obedience, the

bran should be given, which those animals eat that lack understanding.

You, however, be prudent, and hold the memory of the holiness of those who ate manna, and drink from the streams of living water. Be peaceful and reverent in God, so that you may bloom in His garden with the greenness of other good herbs, and avoid the folly of those who leave the sun they see and seek another which they neither see nor can find. Also, avoid the new pretenders who want to set the law in their own property and do not prevail. Now, therefore, begin in Him who is, so that you may be finished in Him who was and who is to come.

In two ways, you are established by God, so that He calls you to good knowledge and protects you from bad knowledge. On these paths, there are brilliant works and many passions of tribulations and disturbances when you elevate yourself through the two wings of the knowledge of good and evil. Therefore, also consider the three powers that God has placed in man, namely, intellect, sensuality, and bodily motion, which are all known to him according to their capacity. In these three powers and in the aforementioned two ways, God holds you.

For by the spirit of the Lord, you see with your intellect, and through your body, you feel evil with sensuality. You know good and evil and are both spiritual and corporeal. The grace of God calls you in admonition, and the Holy Spirit ignites you with His fire so that you love God and ascend to Him with good works. But the suggestion of the devil sometimes distracts you from God's admonition and prevents you from loving God, showing you that you are a human through its burning, and because of this, it also declares that it is sometimes impossible for you to do invisible things.

The suggestion of the devil breathes a certain black and evil change into man when he denies God. When the devil denies the existence

of God, he knows himself to be deceitful, because when he knows himself to exist, he knows that God exists. He also has some part in the sin of men born in sin, through which he lacerates many in the flesh. For whoever says in his heart that there is no God denies the heaven, the earth, all living things that are in and with God, and even himself. It is great foolishness for a man who sees and knows himself to say in doubt, "I do not exist," because even a small speck of dust does not exist without God.

But when a man overcomes his body in this doubt, he also slays the devil in spiritual wickedness, for which he will receive a reward and a crown before God and His angels and all the heavenly host. The devil's breath brings many illicit things to man, which good knowledge is ashamed to speak of. His counsel is that vain glory should visit man, just as it did where he built a great ruin, making the wheel of human birth circle torrentially.

The devil's burning is also that he provokes man, whom he knows to be made in the image of God, to many illicit things, showing him many impossibilities in creatures, but he has no power in them. Therefore, he instills his persuasions into man so that man may carry out his wickedness by choice, thus leading the path of God's law into mockery, so that each man sets the law for himself as if he were a god through his own will. And this pleases him greatly because he does not want himself or anyone else to be subject to God.

But you, O son of God, the God who created you, wants you through the victory of His service to appear in the eye of His knowledge, for He will not abandon you. Therefore, look at the sun through faith so that you may be a faithful servant, and attend to the moon at night when vices want to oppress you, so that the fear of the Lord may pass through you, and you will not be harmed, but will live forever.

Letter 97: R97: Provost R. von Zwettl to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Prepositus of Zwettl to Hildegard.

To the holy and venerable mother Hildegard, R., servant of the servants of God from Zwettl, may you see the King of kings in His beauty in the land of the living. The grace of God diffused on your lips is proven by the manifestation of the Spirit given to you for the benefit of many. For we believe that you have received the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, who is from God and is God, who breathes where He wills, has mercy on whom He wills, and hardens whom He wills.

Knowing this, I have decided to consult your prudence through this letter, or rather, to invoke the Holy Spirit, the author of your prudence, to dispel the darkness of my mind through you. For I bear a heavy burden, namely the duty of pastoral care, which is difficult and laborious for me to carry until the end, not meriting such a task by life nor by the teaching of wisdom, and equally perilous to lay down.

Therefore, I beseech your holiness to console my faintheartedness in this fluctuation and to deign to write back to me whatever the Holy Spirit may please.

Letter 98: R98: Hildegard von Rupertsberg an Provost R. von Zwettl

Response of Hildegard.

In your mind, you ponder and exaggerate, wishing to rest and desist from every labor, and thus you do not lift your hand to perform the work of your Master. Instead, you say within yourself with gnashing teeth, "I cannot endure all that opposes and contradicts me." This time is similar to the time of the children of Israel, when their overseers labored greatly to instruct them in God's commandments, but they looked down upon God, turning to their own self-will.

This also happens now among the children of Israel, that is, in the spiritual people who are in the contemplation of God. But no matter how the children of Israel have sinned, God has never left them without a teacher. The perfect Teacher Himself came last, who in His humanity wounded all iniquity and was the most powerful of all, for none appeared like Him. But consider what He suffered from the unjust and what example He left for teachers.

You, however, say within yourself, "I can accomplish no good among them." Look into yourself and see how you carry and sustain them, so that neither they are blamed with you, nor you are blamed with them. He who loves justice and afflicts iniquity, and does not communicate with it in any way, is righteous even if he is not heard by his disciples. For Christ gathered His beloved and chosen ones, though He was not accepted by all men.

Look into yourself with the girding of God's justice, as it is written, "The king's daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is wrought gold." This means, be gentle and meek in your mind and heart, and let this be done in the golden fringes, that is, expand wisely and act with the girding of justice, correcting your subjects with charity and

spreading it everywhere, just as the winds are divided in their strength.

The north wind strikes and spares nothing, but there is another wind similar to it that sustains it. Another wind, contrary to these, is mild, and yet another tempers them all. The north wind is firm correction, in which a certain anger lies hidden, but another wind sustains it with severity and discretion, so that man may correct justly. The wind that is milder teaches man to be merciful and pious, remembering that he is also a man. Thus, this wind is the eye of the other winds. But the burning wind tempers all these winds with charity, dividing and discerning them, so that the north wind does not fall with a deadly disease, as Satan fell, but perseveres in righteousness.

And the wind that is severe stands in the constancy of just vindication, as it is written, "Be angry, and sin not." This means that such anger must not be allied with iniquity by consenting to it, and must not utterly crush a man with hateful crime. Therefore, the gentler wind, tempered by the aforementioned burning wind, persists with discreet correction, as a father strikes his son with a rod but loves him nonetheless.

In this way, temper, divide, and discern yourself. Correct yourself in the faith and fear of God. Then the jester of vices and the clouding of restless habits will flee from you, and the fire of the Holy Spirit will burn in you.

R99: Nikolaus von Heilsbronn to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Nicholas, Abbot in Halesbrunnun to Hildegard.

To the venerable and much-beloved mother in Christ, Lady Hildegard of Saint Rupert, Brother Nicholas, known as Abbot in Halesbrunnun, wishes everything that can be desired more happily or hoped for more splendidly. Certain that you have always found joy in providing the most beneficial counsel to all, I earnestly pray that you may also counsel me with your usual affection.

As to why I have not visited your holiness for so long, I believe it is not unknown to you, though I have deeply desired it. But what I cannot accomplish in deed, I perform in thought. Whether this is so, there is no need for any witness other than yourself. Now, however, I humbly ask, seek, and knock that divine consolation may be granted to me through you, namely, that I may be forewarned by your letters and delivered from evil by your holy prayers. For we know that nothing is impossible with God, nor can this be denied to you. Farewell.

Letter 100: R100: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Nikolaus von Heilsbronn

Response of Hildegard.

The true light in the light says through the mouth of wisdom: The old law left behind official signs and had tedium in the hearing of the word and did not want to labor. And thus, it ended. Then the Church rose under the banner of the King and observed the same law with the purest eye, without tedium, but labored willingly. Thus, you, O worthy soldier, should do likewise.

Again, when a warrior leads his army, if a lowly man allows his banner to fall, another very strong man lifts it up and carries it valiantly, for which his lord loves him greatly and gives him a great reward. So it will be with you if you labor valiantly with Christ in His stead. Your mind shines with good intention toward God, but a certain wind of uselessness fatigues you, which the Holy Spirit will cast away from you.

The streets of some cities are muddy, and the shoes of some men are full of decay, and justice is clouded with iniquity, and the precepts of the law are violated with the transgression of the commandments of God. Therefore, let the shepherds wail and sprinkle themselves with ashes, because the established ranks of the Church no longer want to know what they are. For the head lacks eyes, and the feet have no paths, because the excessive iniquities of men's sins have not yet been fully purged by the hand of God.

Nevertheless, these evils will not last long, and a better light will shine than before. Now, however, some men are divided into two parts of their hearts: on one part, with the pride of mind, they want to know everything; on the other, they hate the progress of those who walk in the right way. These men are severely and harmfully harassed by the most wicked diabolical crowd, which is called the

heart of evil. And this kind of malignant spirits does not dare to contradict what God has established, but distracts each cause to another, so that what they want and choose in perdition, they say in their judgment is good and holy in God. And thus, they lead the people into great mockery.

But how is this kind to be escaped? It is destroyed in the humility and steadfastness of faithful men.

Letter 101: R101: Burgundian Abbots to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Certain Abbots to Hildegard.

B. of Bellevaux, G. of Clairvaux, A. of Clairfontaine, R. of Charity, G. of Bethany, known as abbots, to Hildegard, the chosen bride of Christ, flourishing in grace and praising with song. We render actions of thanks with the joy of our whole hearts to the giver of all spiritual gifts, God, who does not disdain to renew His ancient miracles in our time. From this, we easily perceive that we are not defrauded of His promises, with which He once consoled His own, saying, "Behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Although we are found unworthy of these promises, we nevertheless recognize our hearts inflated by them, cooperating with the Holy Spirit through your heart. So that, although unlearned in writing books or performing other wonders, we marvel at the heavenly harmony that wonderfully breathes through you, making known to mortals things previously unknown. And what a wonder! Now, truly, I say, as the bride of Christ and leaning upon your beloved, with His left hand under your head and His right hand embracing you, He has led you into His chamber and excellently revealed His secrets to you.

We earnestly wish that the Lord may comfort you in these matters and humbly request that you deign to reveal to us anything concerning our state that is divinely revealed to you! But the woman bearing this letter is a noblewoman and the wife of a very beloved man. She comes to you with much devotion, humble and on foot, although she could come with horses and much retinue. The reason for her coming is this: for a long time she has remained barren, although she previously bore children. However, after their deaths

and being unable to bear more, she and her husband are greatly afflicted with grief.

Therefore, she flees to you, the handmaid and intimate of Christ, having confidence that through your merits and prayers, you may obtain from God that she may conceive again and offer the blessed fruit of her womb in procreation to Christ. Hence, we, at her and her husband's request, ask you to stand before God in this petition on their behalf and that they may be granted what they desire.

Letter 102: R102: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Burgundian Abbots

The response of Hildegard. O people who through the grace of God are in the pastoral care of the Lord's calling! Learn the first calling of Adam when God said to him, "Where are you?" when through disobedience he became a transgressor. Then his name was like dark earth, but God gave him clothing, knowing that for his sake he would take on the robe of humanity. In which also, with a clear voice of mercy, He called him back, when the prodigal son returned to memory of himself and said, "How many hired servants in my father's house have bread enough and to spare, and I perish here with hunger!" And his father received him with joy. It is fitting for you teachers to see with the first eye of clarity that God called Adam back through another way, namely through the kiss of humanity in the fatted calf, thus saying, "Man perished through disobedience, but I will bring him back through repentance."

But ascend to the high mountain and make tabernacles in the valley and stay in them for a long time. For when you look up, you follow God by ascending the mountain, and also look into deep humility because the Son of God carried the whole man in his humanity. And in all your works, namely in yourselves and in others, pay attention to humility and persevere in it for a long time. Therefore, beware lest your mind be like a black mountain where, through the arts of blacksmiths, iron is made in burning coals. These are squalid customs in bad habits, sometimes by thinking, sometimes by desiring, sometimes by doing things that are useless and do not bring holiness, but cause the injury of lust. Flee from these, soldiers of God, and look at that light which you have tasted a little, and quickly rise to holiness because you do not know when you will reach the end.

For God gave rationality to man. For through the word of God, man is rational! But the irrational creature is like a sound. Thus, God established all creation in man. And to rationality, He gave two wings, the right wing signifying good knowledge, and the left wing signifying bad knowledge. In these, man is like a flying creature and also like day and night. For when the day oppresses the night in man, man is called a good soldier because he overcomes evil with military virtue. Hence, you, O sons of God, be soldiers for Christ by day and flee the cloud in the quiet of your mind that obscures the day! And also avoid the nocturnal ambushes that speak of excess through their own will in the dilation of the heart. And be like the day touched by the falling dew in the morning, and later tempered by the calm weather, so that you test all things in discretion and rightly provide what is good for you and others. Therefore, dwell in the caves of the dove with pure simplicity so that you may have the voice of exultation and salvation in the tabernacles of the just. For God placed the vital voice of the breath of life in rationality, namely the voice of exultation which, with good knowledge, sees and recognizes God in faith.

And the same voice sounds in a well-sounding trumpet with works of benevolence. For this voice has the embrace of charity, so that it also gathers the meek with humility and anoints wounds with mercy. Charity also flows with the torrent of the Holy Spirit, namely with the peace of God's goodness. Humility also prepares a garden with all the fruitful trees of God's grace, which has the circle of all the greenery of God's gifts. Mercy, however, sweats balm for all the necessities that come upon man. This voice of charity also sounds in the symphony of all the praises of salvation. It also sounds highly through humility, where it sees God and fights with victory against pride. This voice indeed cries with a lamentable and joyful voice through mercy, because it gathers the poor and the lame to itself and because it thus seeks help from the Spirit to fulfill all these things

with good works. Indeed, it sounds in the tabernacles where the saints shine through those buildings that they prepared for themselves in this world. But you, O sons of God, join the voice of the good, where the just are, and God will receive you because He wants you and you will live forever.

As for what you seek, for the matron to be blessed with aid in fertility, this is in God's will and power because He knows where to grant offspring and where to take away offspring, for He judges not according to human sight but according to inner judgment. For I will pray to God for her since you ask, but let Him do what He has kindly and mercifully planned to be done in this matter.

Letter 103: R103: Abt E. von Averbode to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

The abbot in Eberbach to Hildegard.

Hildegard, adorned with the flowers of holy virtues. Most glorious servant of Christ from Bingen. E., a humble and unworthy provider of the brothers in Eberbach, for the pursuit of good purpose. To be rewarded with a daily evangelical denarius. I will not cease to give immense thanks to God, who has placed your noble person like a burning and shining lamp not hidden under a bushel but placed on a candlestick. Who does not cease to protect and comfort your revered sanctity with angelic visitation and the grace of His spirit. Who also has spread the good fame of your reputation not only in the region of Germany but also in our parts and other parts of the world far and wide, like a good fragrance. So that you may rightly say with the apostle, we are the good fragrance of Christ to God in every place. And we, rejoicing in the great summit of your piety, are compelled to say, how beautiful you have become in delights, daughter of the prince. We will exult and rejoice in you, remembering your breasts more than wine! In which we, the infirm, find what to suck, and all the strong and robust ones, according to the wisdom given to you by God, taking solid food, may be able to say without blame, your lips distilling the first myrrh! and your lips a dripping honeycomb O bride beloved by God. For a city placed on a mountain of virtues cannot be hidden, because the Lord has established you as an immovable and unshakable pillar in the midst of His church. So that among the trials of this world, His people, redeemed at the price of His blood, may learn through you what to seek and what to avoid, and instructed by the examples of your good virtues, they may progress day by day, and ascending from virtue to virtue without sloth, may be able to see the God of gods in Zion. Therefore, trusting in the help of your prayers, although I am not worthy to

receive the crown of labors, at least may it be my reward to have escaped punishment. Therefore, I diligently commend myself to your prayers, for I have often offended the mercy of God with great sins. Farewell, most beloved lady, and pray to the Lord for me, unworthy. And with the words given to you by God, greet.

Letter 104: R104: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Abt E. von Averbode

Response of Hildegard.

The darts that come in disbelief and in the insult of malicious words are like a dangerous wind that suddenly comes to the heart of man. And this is the storm of the first angel, in which he himself despised God. For I often see in the happiness of a man whom God greatly loves that these pains present themselves to him, because the enemy knows his happiness and wants to oppress him in this storm so that he may fall with him. But he is not able to snatch him from the bosom of God. Nevertheless, distress and tribulation come to him from the elements, yet in such moderation that God watches over him. But as the Church received the new birth of new offspring in the blood of Christ, so it was necessary and fitting for the gift of the Holy Spirit, namely the water, to be joined with the blood of Christ, because there is also decay in the blood of every man. But I also advise you, O head of the family on the mountain of Zion, that you be a trumpet sounding vigorously in the spiritual people of your flock so that they may not fail in charity and in obedience, and you will live forever. Have eyes on all sides to look upon justice and truth, so that your soul is always vigilant, lest you be hindered by the noise of this world.

Letter 105: R105: Richard von Springiersbach to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Richard, abbot in Sprinchersbach, to Hildegard.

Richard, unworthy minister of the servants of God in Sprinchersbach, to Hildegard, the congregation of Saint Robert, most holy and worthy steward of God. After the end of this world, to receive a share of the heavenly city. What I have ordered to be conveyed to your holiness either by letters or by the present bearer himself, is for this reason: because I myself, desiring indeed to come for myself and on my own behalf, and not being able, confess that I have consumed not a few days and years in vain thinking about this. For how much and how greatly I have always desired from the beginning the presence and conversation of your holiness, I now testify truthfully and sincerely before God, to whom all things are open and clear.

Therefore, unhappy as I am in dispensing or administering pastoral care, completely lacking strength both of mind and body, because I see myself as quite useless, weak, and inadequate for dispensing or administering these duties, I desire more and more to grieve, weep, and be delivered from the body of this death. Now therefore, most holy and blessed among women, I desire to seek the Lord concerning my cause through you, as is customary, and to consult the Lord about whether I should rather cease and desist from this very occupation and administration, if it were permitted by you.

Therefore, with sealed and closed letters, I beg you for the sake of God to inform me as soon as possible about the content of this matter, and to gladden my sorrowful heart with your counsel and assistance in the Lord.

Letter 106: R106: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Richard von Springiersbach

Response of Hildegard.

Listen to the mysteries of God. The Lord, who possesses a family subject to Him, when He chooses someone from that same family, giving them a place of sanctification to bear a burden with Him, and if that person excuses themselves, claiming they are not worthy to bear that burden, then if their Lord does not heed them because it pleases Him that they bear the burden, they should not disturb their Lord, but should humbly obey as much as they are able.

If afterward in the same cause any defect of any usefulness should arise due to the weakness of their understanding and knowledge, it will not harm them because their Lord will provide for it. Now, father and friend in the place of Christ, consider this message and listen. Your mouth is heavenly and your mind flourishes with the cloud. Hence let your root ascend and worship the Lord your God, putting on the breastplate and fighting against vices, fleeing from lasciviousness and not embracing greed. And the God whom you secretly invoke, will receive you in His love.

Letter 107: R107: Abt S. von Rothenkirchen to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Abbot in Rodenkirchen to Hildegard.

[S.] in Rodenkirchen, having the office of a poor prelate, to his lady and mother, Hildegard, from Saint Robert in Bingen, with the affection of intimate love and prayer. As the multitude of the faithful proclaims, it is no wonder that God is found when sought by you, since it appears that you have unwavering faith in Him. And what is more, by His favor and grace, you have consecrated the integrity of your virginity to Him! And since then, you have lived before Him in holiness and justice as a vessel of election. And undoubtedly, He who has established you to live in such a manner, and, what is most important, to reveal the secrets of His mysteries through you, judges you worthy to be heard in whatever you ask in His name.

And certainly, what pertains to you, what I have heard and partly seen, I believe to be divine and holy without any doubt, and I cannot doubt these things in any way, since I know that nothing is impossible for God. For God, just as He wished to reveal the secrets of His divinity through prophesying men, so He also sometimes wished and could reveal them through holy women, as Joel testifies: "I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and daughters shall prophesy, and upon my servants and handmaids, I will pour out my spirit." Moreover, it is written that Deborah, Huldah, Anna the mother of Samuel, Elizabeth the mother of John the Baptist, and other devout women had the spirit of prophecy and were nevertheless married. How much more you, entirely free from the frailty of the flesh, keeping chastity for God from your childhood years?

I give immense thanks to the almighty mercy of God that I have deserved to reach the knowledge of your blessedness! Therefore, I

humbly knock on your maternal heart, so that you may send words of consolation to me in writing, and lift me up, greatly tossed by storms, as you have often done with your living voice, so also now in writing for the confirmation of memory.

Letter 108: R108: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Abt S. von Rothenkirchen

Response of Hildegard.

Your mind is like a snow-white cloud, which ascends the aerial cloud where the sun flashes, and also sometimes like a turbulent cloud that brings a storm. The snow-white cloud is the weariness of a wandering mind. The aerial cloud, however, points to pure knowledge through patience that has faith. But the turbulent cloud brings the turbulence of much sadness in restless minds.

Learn that the snow-white cloud holds that air which is neither cold nor hot, and from which useful spices do not grow. However, the pure air gives dew and mild weather and rain, from which greenery and flowers thrive. But the turbulent cloud holds the north wind's air, which makes all greenery wither, and from which flowers fall. Flee from this, and stand and remain in the pure air, and in the life that you do not know, remember your Creator! Do not flee from Him when you do not recognize Him by seeing Him.

Also, your spirit exhaled from that life, which is called the soul when the soul proceeded from it. For the soul places and proves works, whether they are good or bad, and by these works, the spirit is a very strong mill. But you, build a building of good works, so that when the circle of your soul is at rest, it may find that building. If it does not find it, it goes to ruin.

Therefore, be vigilant before the shadow of your death approaches. The fiery Holy Spirit will help you in this.

Letter 109: R109: Abt H. von Flonheim an Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Abbot of Flanheim to Hildegard.

To his holy and venerable mother in Christ, Lady Hildegard of Bingen, H., provost of Flanheim, though unworthy, offers much devotion in prayer and service. God, the inspector of hearts, knows how willingly I would honor your holiness with services if I received the place and means by divine ordination. Therefore, in the meantime, I beg you to accept my devotion, and as I have long requested in words, pray to the Lord for me so that He may reveal to you what concerns me, so that I may be worthy to give thanks for the good and to satisfy God for the bad with worthy fruits of penance before I die. Whatever the Lord reveals to you about me, may you deign to inform me in writing, and keep me commended in your prayers. I would have written to you more familiarly and extensively if bodily infirmity had not hindered me.

Letter 110: R110: Hildegard von Rupertsberg an Abt H. von Flonheim

Response of Hildegard.

The living light tells you to vigilantly watch and not gather weariness in the basket of your mind as if you were a stranger, as if you did not have the ability to speak. God requires from you that you have the ability to correct your flock. Therefore, accuse yourself because you do not see God in the purest fountain in this, but you only say, "God, my God, help me!" and yet, by doing so, you do not touch Him. O good soldier, now rise, for the grace of God runs to you and you will live forever, so that you may be a living stone in the heavenly Jerusalem.

Letter 111: R111: Abt W. von Hane to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Abbot in Hegenheim to Hildegard.

To Hildegard, beloved of God and venerable teacher of the sisters of Saint Robert in Bingen. Vv., prelate of the brothers in Hegenheim, although unworthy, wishes you the gift of knowledge and wisdom and the reward of perpetual integrity. When I first heard of your holiness's fame, I hastened to send you my letters to greet you. But since I am uncertain whether they have reached your presence or not, I add these new ones to the previous ones and do not cease to send them often until I know they have been presented to you.

And now, with these letters sent to you, I, very poor and needy, take refuge in the aid of your prayers. Because, after the likeness of man, I do not know what I have received from the gifts of the Most High. My vision is darkened, my hearing is dulled, my tongue is bound by lack of speech, I am silent in divine praises due to the defect of voice and devotion of mind, hindered by the slowness of intellect, emptied by the frailty of memory, my spirit is inflated by pride, kindled by anger, constrained by sadness, cast down by sloth, and confounded by insults with pusillanimity and shame. But to all these evils has been added a severe and troublesome illness, which unless I escape by the mercy of God through you, it is necessary for me to face the imminent danger to my life shortly.

But because God is pious and merciful, and He will fulfill the will of those who fear Him, I ask that through your prayers I may escape all these evils, both in body and soul, and that the yoke of domination of my enemies, which has greatly burdened me, be lifted from me. For their yoke has greatly oppressed me. May He grant me some portion of the multitude of His mercies. Has He also reserved a blessing for me? I implore that He blesses me as well. I also ask

your holiness, if I may dare to ask, to instruct me about the future state of my life.

All these things I presume to ask from you because it is said by your renowned fame that all these things are possible for you through Him who dwells in you, Christ. Farewell, my lady, and may God make me worthy of both your response and the aid of your prayers. For both in life and after death, I commit myself to your holy prayers.

Letter 112: R112: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Abt W. von Hane

Response of Hildegard. The living light says, The first cause you endured in your heart brought a river, the second showed clarity, and the third, which is in pastoral care, is the best, provided your sheep hear your voice. But if they do not hear you, flee from the prelate office, yet in such a way that you rightly account for your talent. For if you cannot work through mastery among your brothers, be like them in subjection. But I tell you, you are fatigued with the weariness of the various changes in the conduct of your mind. Therefore, it is more expedient for you to bear the distress for your other brothers than to restrain yourself alone in subjection. Live, then, in the fiery giver, and do not delay in vigilant sense.

Letter 113: R113: Abt von Kloster Veßra an Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Abbot of Vescera to Hildegard.

To the venerable and most beloved sister in Christ, Lady Hildegard! Brother from Vescera, to see the God of gods in Zion. How much I, though a sinner, desire to see your blessedness can be estimated by the fact that, though distant, I gaze upon your presence in spirit. For who would not desire to see and speak with one who, filled with the Spirit of God, frequently utters heavenly secrets?

For this reason, I have sent these present writings to you, hoping to receive solace and counsel regarding the cares that heavily burden me. Behold, I who cannot suffice to give an account for myself, tremble under the care of many others, compelled by the fear of God and the love of brothers. But as I pondered that I hold the place of a prelate, which I cannot fulfill by deeds, suddenly pains like those of a woman in labor seized me! For long fatigue has deprived me of almost all understanding of knowledge.

Therefore, lest the Lord's flock should suffer danger due to my negligence, I have thought of relinquishing the care I have undertaken and transferring myself to another place. For this reason, I humbly pray that you strengthen my doubtful mind with your counsel and inform me by your writings what the will of the Lord is in this matter.

I know your humility does not disdain our conversation, as the Lord spoke with publicans. Behold, we await your judgment on this cause, for whatever you suggest to me by the inspiration of the Lord, I intend to undertake. Moreover, sympathize with my troubles and more earnestly pray to the Lord. The abyss of continuous anxieties surrounds me, and the sea of immense cares almost swallows me. Have mercy, therefore, mother, have mercy on a son crying out to

you from afar! And lift me up quickly from my fall with your counsel and prayer. May you always fare well in the Lord.

Letter 114: R114: Hildegard von Rupertsberg an Abt von Kloster Veßra

Response of Hildegard. The secret light says: You are terrified as if by the wind, and you slumber in the wood of your mind's greenness. But the man who has the greenness of his inner heart builds on the high wall. A shepherd who tends the flock without internal support in the needs of his fold, but flees out of fatigue, will not benefit from pastoral care. Hence, he should make himself like a sheep and not a shepherd. You are like one tossing in the waters, scarcely freed from drowning, and you seek prudence everywhere, but you lack strength, though not will. Therefore, the grace of God shines upon you.

Letter 115: R115: Abt N. von Ilbenstadt to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Abbot in Eluestat to Hildegard.

To his lady and teacher Hildegard, Brother N. in Eluestat, needy and poor, along with the flock entrusted to him, seeks to be admitted to the eternal company of virgins. I have often sent you many letters and made many personal requests, but I could never obtain letters from you as you promised. Could it be, though it is unthinkable, that the lowly nature of my lineage or the rejection of my humble person prevents this? Or perhaps, more credibly, there is no intercession of merits?

The apostle says, "I am a debtor to the wise and to the unwise," and the very Truth says, "Let the little children come to me." Is there respect of persons with you, mother? Far be it. Now, therefore, hear me, a poor man crying out to you repeatedly, at least once, and pray to our Lord for this wretched man, so that He may deign to relieve His servant, who trusts in Him, surrounded by many and various tribulations and distresses.

Letter 116: R116: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Abt N. von Ilbenstadt

Response of Hildegard.

The serene light that gives words for pondering says: O man! You have the confidence to think of the Son of God. Yet you hesitate to break the bread that you wish to eat with your dictating mind. Why do you go around examining different things and looking everywhere to find that which is in ceremony? Why do you do this? God builds in any cause that acts well and justly. Rise, therefore, to the light, and you will live forever. For God has a holocaust in His instrument. Blessed is the one who always holds God in all his causes because the devil will never deceive him. Live, therefore, O man, and be victorious in the shadowy world.

Letter 117: R117: Abt N. von Selbold to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Abbot in Selbold to Hildegard.

To Hildegard, venerable servant of the almighty God! N., humble and lowly provider in Selbold, wishes you to be filled with all the grace of divine abundance, and after this life to be united with the Lord of all kings, Jesus Christ, in the heavenly chamber. Blessed be the mercy of the almighty God, who in these times of iniquity has given you to His faithful as a shining lamp in the darkness to console them.

Hearing of your blessedness for a long time and recognizing that what was said was true, I rejoice and delight in your blessedness to such an extent that, though my petition is nothing in the sight of God and may seem foolish and fatuous, I always remember you in my prayers. I ask and wish that the Lord may always keep the benefits of His mercy bestowed upon you, and may He increase them in you more and more, and make you a companion of His saints in eternal glory.

But since I cannot physically come to your presence, for which I have great desire, I humbly approach you through these present letters as much as I am able, and I prostrate myself repeatedly at the feet of your kindness. I beg that you may not disdain to earnestly pray to the almighty God for my calamities and miseries. For I do not doubt that you can obtain whatever you wish from the Holy Spirit, who dwells in your holy heart. Nor do I doubt that you know all about my state, and all that happens around me, past, present, and future, through the revelation of these present letters.

Therefore, if in any way the lowliness of my insignificance dares to ask, I humbly beseech with my whole heart and body at the feet of your holiness that you deign to gladden my soul with your writings,

either by admonishing me about past and present matters, or by forewarning and making me cautious about future ones, and the end of my life, if it is not contrary to you.

Letter 118: R118: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Abt N. von Selbold

Response of Hildegard.

The grace of God has led you to the water of drinking, but your mind is not built up in the edifice in which you are. Therefore, discern the fortress of your mind, understanding what and what kind your works are. For sometimes you look to God with good intention, as if your soul were healthy. But you are in a mixed cloud when you experience a rift in your mind due to the tribulation of sighs and trouble because of the nature of your labor.

Sometimes your mind also ascends as if you were useful. Therefore, test yourself and have living eyes in your work, and prostrate yourself on the ground as if you did not know yourself, and you will live. For God does not dwell in that dwelling which desires to stand by itself, but loves the house that does not know itself, and He gives it the best ointment. Hence, may your life be good and healthy.

Letter 119: R119: Provost H. von Hördt to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Provost in Herde to Hildegard.

To Hildegard, his most blessed lady and, if he dares to say, dearest mother, H., provost in Herde, though unworthy, and her most devoted servant, with all his subjection, prayer, and most devoted service.

What thanks, lady and most holy mother, can we render fittingly to your piety, who did not consider the excessive weakness of your body nor the difficulty of the journey, due to the immense sweetness of your heart, for the visitation of our monastery, and who again sought to gladden us with a repeated visitation? For the grace of the Holy Spirit does not know slow efforts! Therefore, you, the beloved and chosen bride of the supreme King, who are worthy to hear special praises from your bridegroom's mercy, behold, He says, "You are beautiful, my friend, behold, you are beautiful! Your eyes are like doves."

You, I say, who, crowned with many garlands of virtues among the daughters of Jerusalem, emit the good and sweet fragrance of Christ like a lily among thorns, and like a heavenly light among the darkness of this world, shining forth with the composition of life and holiness, bring consolation of hope to us sinners, while you so often extend to us the grace of your maternal visitation.

For although we are like the publican of the Gospel, not worthy to lift our eyes to heaven, yet when we merit to hear through the instrument of your mouth the voice of Him who dwells in you, the Lord Christ, we become like those consoled. Therefore, giving humble thanks to Christ the Lord, who deigns to console us unworthy ones through you, we bend our knees and humbly implore you, our lady and mother, to deign to pour forth prayers for us

sinner to Him who has led you into the chamber of His mysteries, that by the intercession of your merits, He may graciously deign to deliver us from sins and enemies and lead us with you from the perilous shipwreck of this world to the port of eternal happiness and security.

May the Lord go before you with blessings of sweetness and may the Father of all consolation hear your prayers for us. We humbly greet the community of holy women who serve the Lord Jesus Christ faithfully with you and under your guidance and commend ourselves to their prayers. We earnestly desire your written response with all devotion.

Letter 120: R120: Hildegard von Rupertsberg an Provost H. von Hörden

Response from Hildegard.

This is what he says, who infuses a good and sweet understanding into people. The sweetest fragrance of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is present among faithful people. Therefore, in whatever place sanctity exists, there a person can be restored to life in a shipwrecked world. Hence, O honest soldier of Christ, seek the salvation of your soul while the living fountain infuses your spirit with sweet infusion! Because the doubts that you have established in your mind do not bring about security within you. Therefore, remain in your place. There, loving the first gift that was given to you from above, your soul is renewed in righteousness. For it is not suitable for the benefit of your soul that you seek another change! But flee this wandering, lest your mind be confused in fear. Hence, be such that you become a friend of God, not fleeing His ceremonies! And God will save you.

Letter 121: R121: Provost A. von Hameln to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Provost in Hamelen. To Hildegard.

Hildegard, the gem of the blessed, true bride of Christ, also instructed in the regular discipline according to the rule of Augustine in Hamelen, an unworthy steward! Devote yourself to prayer without abstinence. During the long interval of time, through spiritual charity, the frequent sickness of my body ultimately made me seek your presence repeatedly. For you know, daughter of Christ, that when I once presented myself to you, I exhibited an exceptional languor clinging to my body. This has not ceased day and night! I am tormented not a little. Just as human frailty is blind to divine retribution, if due to the increase of benefactors I have fallen into sickness or temptation, I do not know. By the grace of God, I am what I am. Because I do not cease to offer the weight of small labor both in vigils and prayers to Almighty God for various matters! If it is permitted, I implore you, most holy one, to send the end of labors. And you, mother of your daughters, trusting in the help of your piety in God, I beseech you to be an intermediary in the supplication of help. I seek the aid of your piety. I beg you with your prayers to cure my sickness. For the prayer of the just is very effective when persistent. But I, a not insignificant sinner, dangerously overwhelmed in the infirmity of soul and body, am unable to explain many things. I ask that written works be sent to me to see, and if there are any matters to be performed in divine mysteries, to delegate them. Farewell, my lady! And intercede with your bridegroom for me.

Letter 122: R122: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Provost A. von Hameln

Response from Hildegard.

He who is says: The king sees a ladder that is darkened in the fluctuation of pestilence. And the sun shone forth and tore apart that darkness. And this pleased the king. And he said: This fleeing ladder is in weariness because it sometimes climbs to great heights and sometimes is darkened. Such is your mind, O man. In the day of your soul's inquiry, you ascend to me in joyous happiness! And again, in harmful pestilence, you cultivate a falling sickness, as if the cause of salvation should not be sought. It is impossible for ashes to be immobile. Look to me and always seek the balm of medicine in the day and in the storm, and you will live forever. Uphold the pure law and flee doubt! And God will save you.

Letter 123: R123: Provost N. von Wadgassen to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Provost in Waddegos. To Hildegard.

Lady Hildegard, revered teacher of the brides of Christ who are in blessedness! I, N. in Waddegos, although an unworthy prelate, send a prayer with all the devotion of affectionate love. Charity without affection seems very much like a cold fire. For just as fire without heat cannot bind iron to iron, so too charity without affection cannot at all bring about that the heart and soul of believers be one in God. True charity is affectionate. This makes the soul adhere to God, so that it becomes one spirit with Him. This, like a living glue, connects the minds of the faithful, so that they are of one will in God. It causes rejoicing with those who rejoice and weeping with those who weep. Certainly, by the Lord's generosity, the memory of your holiness is made sweet to me in the sweetness of holy love. In the celebration of the divine office, it always whispers the memory of you to my heart. It also, through frequent sighs, desires your affection for me. Indeed, for a long time, I have desired to see you face to face, to speak mouth to mouth, and to attain your familiarity, so that I might someday receive some edification and consolation from you. For I am exceedingly weak within my soul and in need of much healing. Therefore, because I have great confidence both in you and in the love with which I love you, I ask that you do not neglect to visit me at some time. But if this cannot be done in bodily presence, let it be done by writing whenever it pleases you. Always, however, with the help of your prayers.

Letter 124: R124: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Provost N. von Wadgassen

Response from Hildegard.

He who does not remain silent, but keenly observes all things, says: When a wise man builds a city on a high mountain through his desires, it is fitting that he takes great care lest his enemies destroy his building with many terrors. Therefore, listen, O man. Guard your temple diligently, so that your enemies may not destroy the city of God within you. He who glows in his heart due to the fear of God, so that he laments his sins in the face of his mind, this is a virtuous soldier and receives this response from God: O dear son! You have a good taste within you; therefore, I delight in you. But he who has a pale face in his mind, saying, "I do not know what I am or what my companions are," this is not a virtuous soldier but leads his soul into tedium. To him, I give this response: O man! You do not know what you are saying. First, lament your sins, and then, as much as you can, cleanse your brothers. Have patience, for God sees us all as sinners, but He does not despise those who do penance. Therefore, live in God and walk in eternal happiness.

Letter 125: R125: Provost C. in Indersdorf to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Prepositus in Indersdorf. To Hildegard.

C., by the grace of God called Prepositus in Indersdorf, to sister Hildegard and teacher on Mount Saint Robert, to abound in the spirit of fortitude. The devotion of your pious reputation has affected the minds of many, especially the religious, and has sweetened them with a certain holy love. Hence, for the grace divinely bestowed upon you, we give thanks to the highest giver of all good things, who has instilled in a feminine heart the strength of a man, not only to avoid wickedness or crimes but also to provide necessary counsel and aid to the needy. But since we speak to your busy ears, we do not dare to prolong the speech. We therefore ask your clemency to kindly extend to us the aid of your consolation.

Letter 126: R126: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Provost C. in Indersdorf

Response from Hildegard.

He who is shows me these things, saying: Tell this man: O man, I see you as a wooden tabernacle made by the hands of artisans. At your door, two images are knocking. One is full of eyes and has black hair, named Fear of the Lord. And it says to you: I want to sanctify you with sacrifices. Yield to me, and I will enter your chamber and make a good taste in you with musk and spices. O soldier, beware lest you are slow to run with your oil lamp and to lead with a living eye towards righteousness.

But the other image, like a trumpet sounding in a white cloud with the form of a human circle, is named Strength. And it says to you: Hey, hey, hey, why do you sleep in your knowledge like a rustic in his manners who gladly remains silent and does not wish to fight with armor, helmet, sword, and spear? Therefore, resound like a trumpet through many waters and do not be silent, and I will help you with my companions. Stand in the wall of the temple and do not be fearful because of the restlessness of the winds, but learn to be a pillar in the palace of the king. Flee also from double tongues, which are wounds of the soul, but speak everywhere in truth according to the likeness of the sun! And we will gladly make our dwellings in you.

Letter 127: R127: Friedrich von Gottesthal to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Provost in Kloster Gottesthal. To Hildegard.

Frederick, by the grace of God, Prepositus in Kloster Gottesthal, though unworthy, to Hildegard, the devoted servant of Christ, to receive blessing from the Lord and mercy from God her Savior. We give the most heartfelt thanks to God that you are well in Him, that you flourish in the beauty of virtues, and that you, along with the sisters entrusted to you, are steadfast with full affection of the heart to the Beloved from the Beloved. We trust in the Lord that you hold our memory with Him. However, I am burdened with many matters, which is why I have not sent a favorable message until now.

Therefore, I ask that your affection is not grieved, but that you fulfill through the present bearer what you have promised, so that you may obtain a reward from God for this. I implore you, along with all the sisters, to be mindful of us before Christ.

Letter 128: R128: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Friedrich von Gottesthal

Response from Hildegard.

Now I say to you: A man who has a vineyard or a rocky field and says to himself, "It is laborious to work here," and thus abandons them, is a weary laborer. But when the time of harvest comes, his master will say to him: "Go to the fields and seek the fruit among the flowers that sometimes bloom and sometimes wither." But he finds nothing there. Listen. The vineyard is the priestly office, but he who holds the rod of correction among the grievous people possesses a rocky field. When these things tire him, he says to himself: "This life and that life, and this life, is better for me." And so what he contemplates at one time, he abandons at another, like a flower that withers. But if you were to do these things, it would be said to you as to a steward who is defamed before his lord about his stewardship, and who thought to himself to write down less for each person than was owed. Hence his lord said to him: "The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light." The first fallen angel did not want to sigh in repentance, nor does he allow others to sigh. But let the priest rise and hasten to help others. Now consider these things and remain in the wiser part with the children of this world, because if you acted according to the thoughts that fly within you, you would fail on both sides and in repentance remember what you had left behind. But you, remain with these people and do not abandon them, so that you may live forever.

Letter 129: R129: Provost N. von Cappenberg to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Provost in Kappenberg. To Hildegard.

To his reverend lady, virgin, and bride of Christ, Hildegard, brother N., prelate of the servants of God in Kappenberg, wishing the reward of holy virginity and the perpetual crown of pious conduct. The fame of your religious life and conduct pleasing to God, spread everywhere in the Church, delights many beyond the fragrance of balsam and other aromas. We too, in our cells like in subterranean caves, have finally begun to perceive this fragrance. Therefore, I, the least of all, desiring to follow such a scent, intended to come to you. But hindered by the great storm of tempests and gales which now shakes and troubles the whole Church, and fearing for both matters and body, I was delayed and could not come. However, I ask through Christ who dwells in you, that you listen to the bearer of these letters, our beloved brother, as if it were me present. To consult the Spirit of God who dwells in you regarding the present state of our Church, I have sent him to you. Do not disdain to share with us what is of God, of charity, and of piety, so that we, comforted through Him who comforts many in you, may breathe anew. Beyond the sweetness of your presence, we do not dare to embitter with uncultivated speech. We earnestly beseech you not to hesitate to indicate anything to the present brother and finally to write back briefly at the end of this scroll. With all those entrusted to you by Christ, farewell in Christ! And remember me for His sake.

Letter 130: R130: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Provost N. von Cappenberg

Response from Hildegard.

In some part, I see darkness in you. How? Because your heart is entangled with sadness, which is carried about by doubt like a millstone, saying, "What is my cause? What is my purpose?" You should look at the day that rises in the purest dawn and is later surrounded by the vicissitudes of storms. Such is your life. For if you always had prosperity, you would be like a crab that does not walk straight. Thus, God allows you to be wearied because the father who loves his son strikes him with the rod. In this way, "Truth has sprung from the earth, and righteousness has looked down from heaven." That is, God tests all truth through the man whom He formed from the clay of the earth. The earth, which is hard and stony, is scarcely cut by the plow, but good and soft earth is cultivated with joy. And in both cases, God is truthful. He breaks the hard and harsh man with labor, but He embraces the gentle and kind man with the kiss of charity, who willingly fulfills all good works. And the grace of God, which bathes all hard and kind things through the sun of righteousness, hears all who cry out to Him with the sighs of their hearts, because just as God has established the sun to illuminate all the earth and not sustain darkness, so the power of God through His grace refuses this hardness, lest it responds to Him who calls Him. Therefore, do not fear your torments, for I do not see your place in dispersion, but God wills the binding of your burden in this way! Therefore, gather the sheep that want to run to you, and patiently tolerate those who do not want you until they call you! And live forever.

Letter 131: R131: Provost G. von St. Viktor in Mainz to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Provost of Saint Victor to Hildegard.

To Hildegard, mirror of divine contemplation! G., outcast of the people, and prepositus of Saint Victor in Mainz! If the sighs of a contrite and humble heart have any worth, drawn by the sweet fragrance of your good reputation and inspired to hope for salvation from profound iniquity, I will dare to present and lament my miseries before your goodness, and seek help and counsel with the spirit of pious presumption. For how many miseries I have fallen into, how much shame and confusion I have endured, how many tears I have shed, I can scarcely express in words. But it is no wonder. For when my soul and body were polluted by so many outrages and impurities, it is just and kind judgment of God—if it is permissible to admit—that divine correction, though not a commensurate suffering, followed. For I often fell into abominable iniquity, both in deeds and thoughts, which you, lady, know better by the revelation of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, not all things are rightly done concerning my soul, which it is not necessary to write. For the Spirit teaches you all things. Therefore, prostrate at the feet of your holiness, though I am dust and ashes, I humbly and devoutly ask that you call upon the Consoler and Deliverer of our souls for me, and make known to me whether I have hope for salvation, whether I am predestined for life, or foreknown for death. But I beg that this presumption is not considered foolishness in me. Moreover, may the Holy Spirit, who dwells in you, grant you to respond to all my desires according to my faith and humility. Farewell.

Letter 132: R132: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Provost G. von St. Viktor in Mainz

Response from Hildegard.

The light in serenity says: The mountain ascends and goes into the whirlwind! Therefore, remember, my son, to make your paths straight in the taste of good understanding, as the Psalmist says: "Turn away from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it." But also gather good things to yourself so that your soul does not faint, for God does not abandon the righteous but in His mercy receives sinners. Hence, choose for yourself the right paths, and you will live forever. Have pure eyes in your mind so that illusion does not deceive you. You sit among thorns and look around you on all sides, gathering various things to yourself, and benevolence remains in you! Yet there is some deficiency in your works. Therefore, now rise and do not be weary of rising from the thorns lest they choke you, for God does not delight in the work that is built among thorns. Therefore, O son of God, rise quickly before the sun sets on you.

Letter 133: R133: Provost S. in Koblenz to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Provost in Koblenz. To Hildegard.

To Hildegard, beloved in Christ. S., prepositus of the brothers in Koblenz, although unworthy, sends greetings in the Lord. Because in all my tribulations you have always comforted me with your consolations, and all that you predicted to me has already been fulfilled, I ask that now you also beseech the merciful Lord to console me in all that oppresses me both outwardly and inwardly. And if you see anything concerning me, especially if I may dare to hope for any future life from the kind Jesus, O most beloved and loving one, please write it down for me. Furthermore, know that I pray to the Lord with the most heartfelt prayers that before my death I may be converted from my sins with worthy penance. Farewell.

Letter 134: R134: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Provost S. in Koblenz

Response from Hildegard.

O you who are the handiwork of God's fingers, correct the fluctuations of your behavior and do not extend yourself into the volatility of your mind from which you cannot excuse yourself! For God foresees all things. God does not command me to expound His judgments upon you but to pray for you, because certain past deeds of your parents now seek retribution, for God sometimes extends His scourges to the third and fourth generation. Yet, trust in the Lord, that He will deliver you from the hand of your enemies' sword.

I speak more about the salvation of souls than about human affairs, and therefore I often remain silent on these matters, because the Holy Spirit does not reveal Himself amidst the confusion of the people's crimes, but through righteous judgment. May God place you in the pasture of life so that you may live eternally. And I say, no weight in the balance can be compared to the days, months, years, or other times ordained by God. For the living God, who is the King of kings and whose judgments are just, must be earnestly prayed to, that He may absolve the sins of sinners through those prayers which are sought in God, because many opportunities have been torn apart by their own foolishness, like idols carried away by the noise of disbelief, leading the people into mockery.

Letter 135: R135: Arnold I von Valcourt to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Arnoldus, provost, to Hildegard.

To Hildegard, the most dear lady and mother, Arnoldus, unworthy provost of St. Andrew in Cologne, always wishing you well in the Lord. How greatly my soul is distressed both inwardly and outwardly by the tribulations and temptations, you, my dearest lady, know both from my words and from divine revelation. Now, therefore, because I am failing and see no progress in myself towards God, I have written to you, my lady, ready to do whatever you command me either through divine revelation or the wisdom of your counsel. Do not spare, do not hide, nor conceal my iniquity, I beseech you. For my poor soul, I fear even a little, and I dread being wholly submerged in the depths. Wherefore, intercede and pray for my poor soul, my dearest mother in Christ. The Lord be with you and with all of yours.

Letter 136: R136: Hildegard von Rupertsberg an Arnold I von Valcourt

Response from Hildegard.

The light that lives in entirety says: O you, human, listen. There was a valley that sometimes withered and sometimes blossomed but was not stable in the grasses that bring forth utility; however, it was beautiful to behold by men and not very useful for nourishment. So is your mind. For when you look at yourself, you think that you are not strong in your good conscience, you immediately wither as if you have no hope. And when later your mind rises like a mountain of myrrh and incense, ascending to fear as if you were dead within yourself, trembling with strength. And then you pray saying, "My sins are too great in the wounds of my sins." But then you waste away in your own will and hurry towards worldly matters and do not perfect good works by engaging in them. But in such an opinion is your estimation saying, "I want to do good works." However, good works do not take the form of clarity in you because you waste away in sins. Therefore, cry out through good works! And God will receive you. Listen. See to it that you wither in evil and flourish in good. Cry out, beginning to see God in good will! And do good works in perfection. He who does good works sees God, but he who has the opinion of good is like a mirror in which some form shines, but that form is not in it. Therefore, rise and begin good works and do them in perfection! And God will receive you. But you respond, "I have secular care." What is this conversion? I show you to have mercy, kindness, and virtue that tramples down pride, and to extend your hand to those who are failing and lying in complete sorrow, and to spare those who offend you, so as not to feed the cult of idols which is avarice, and not to strike the face of God, namely the happiness that God has given to another, lest you kill through envy. And you will live.

Letter 137: R137: Provost A. von Erfurt to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Provost of Erphord, to Hildegard.

To Lady Hildegard, beloved bride of Christ, from A. of Erphord, though unworthy, the affection of devoted prayer and service. We do not cease to offer thanks to your holiness, spread far and wide, which salutes many with such sweet letters of greeting. Indeed, with great longing, we desire to see you and to be gladdened by your most kind words of consolation, and to be made joyful by the presence of your radiant face. We pray and wish for this from the depths of our hearts. May the divine mercy, which has begun such a holy and magnificent work in you, divinely perfect it! And through your continuous prayer, may it make us participants in the same goodness of yours. Now, therefore, we most faithfully commend to your love the bearer of these letters, our familiar friend, making his journey to you out of love for God and your piety! So that, received kindly by you, he may deserve to hear the words spoken by the Holy Spirit through your mouth.

Letter 138: R138: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Provost A. von Erfurt

Response from Hildegard.

God foresees you, seeking a sacrifice from your heart in simplicity! For He is truthful and does not desire duplicity on the single path that is faith among neighbors, just as the eye of God in simplicity beholds the happiness of men. May God grant this to you and free you from every tempest of burning vices. Therefore, make the eye of your heart pure. For you are almost weary and forsaken from the house of the One who created you. But you will be called back among strangers, and therefore cease from your sins, for God has not sold you into perdition but seeks you in the lost sheep that has been called back to life. Why do you doubt, as if you were not in salvation? Therefore, seek God in the distress and pain of your soul! And you will live.

Letter 139: R139: Hermann von St. Martin in Mainz to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Hermannus, Provost, to Hildegard.

To Hildegard, most worthy of all glory and honor, Hermannus, provost from the house in Mainz and a wretched sinner, whatever a servant or son of his most beloved lady and mother might say. My spirit boils and fears. It boils to speak, but it fears the greatness of your wisdom and eloquence. For it has been granted to you with accumulated happiness to think wisely and to speak usefully. The authority of the shining scriptures has found a seat in you, remains with you, and has made a repository of you. Moreover, approved by the gifts of discipline, you have become an ornament of the church and an example to the people. If only it had been granted to me from above to adhere to you constantly, to always listen to you, to be continually refreshed by your company. Then indeed I would not have been deprived of my desire, for I have always desired to hear you. Therefore, whatever displeases itself in me and how I might be able to drive it away from myself, by the gift of God and our Lord, you would deign to reveal to me in your sealed letters, I beseech you. May your holiness be well forever. May all your daughters, my most heartfelt sisters, be well and remain faithful.

Letter 140: R140: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Hermann von St. Martin in Mainz

Response from Hildegard.

The mystic words of God proclaim these things. O man of God, by the bond of the law, God knows you in the dark vicissitude of certain deeds. Yet from afar you gaze, as if in a vision, upon a light emerging, a glowing light. Run, therefore, to do good works without the reproach of the duplicity of two paths, that is, where the sound of the mouth is one thing and the intention of the mind another. Also, be mindful that God loves you for doing good because He extends to you the hands of His protection, but you are weak and flee. Take care, therefore, not to hide from that protection lest God strike you with His rod, for He seeks you. For those paths you wished to run were not foreseen rightly when you ascended to heaven. But now you are shaken in two parts, namely by God's permission and by diabolic arts. And God lets the rope loosen for you to understand what you are! Yet, you will not entirely fall into the pit of sadness. Now pray and trust that God will not abandon you! And the dawn will quickly come to you in liberation.

Letter 141: R141: Balderich von St. Simeon to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

To the Provost of Saint Simeon, to Hildegard.

Beldericus, brother of Saint Simeon in the church of Trier, in name only a provost, and among those who sit and weep by the rivers of Babylon, to Hildegard, daughter of Zion, who sometimes sees the God of gods in her very self. Hearing the most sweet fragrance of your blessedness from the accounts of many and from the hearing of my own body, I am gladdened and astonished by the things that have been said to me. I am gladdened, I say, because in this time of the most wicked age, truly placed in wickedness, the beautiful bridegroom is known to have chosen such a bride for himself above the sons of men. I am astonished, however, because he seems to endow her with an extraordinary and unheard-of charisma even in this exile. For who has ever read or heard of an unlearned woman or one entirely illiterate exhaling such great eruptions from the deepest abyss of divine mysteries, or offering such an abundance of living water to the thirsty from the rivers? Truly, God is wonderful. Truly, blessed is the Lord, God, who alone does great wonders. But what is surprising if He makes a rational and reasonable human His instrument as He wills, who even made a brute animal the master of the master? For He does as God about whom it is written, "He has done all that He wished." I pray, however, your affection, that you may more earnestly and frequently strive to commend my humility to your Beloved, knowing that the same solicitude is faithfully and unceasingly returned by me. Farewell.

Letter 142: R142: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Balderich von St. Simeon

Response from Hildegard.

You, servant of God, attend to this: in a short time, turn away from the injustice of unrighteous wealth and with great diligence see to it that you shake off the rust of sins before the shadow of death arrives, when you will no longer be able to work. Do not then lament, saying, "Woe is me, for I was found negligent." Also, pay attention to the head of the household who called laborers into the vineyard from the first hour to the evening and asked others why they stood idle, to which they replied that no one had hired them. For from the first hour to the evening, the Lord called laborers into the vineyard and asked others why they stood idle, who excused themselves by saying that no one had hired them. Often it happens that a person lives from his earliest age to old age in forgetfulness of God and thinks about amending this within himself until, by the grace of God, he wrestles within himself, saying, "Why did I not do good works, because God did not prevent me from turning away from evil?" And so in his old age, because of the weariness of his sins, he begins to repent. Such a person appears like an unkindled clay vessel in the ways of the Lord, for he cannot work! And thus he will receive the first reward by his merit through the grace of God, because he cannot thereafter serve due to age. For in childhood, youth, and mature age, a person often does evil, and afterward does good! This cannot be so in decrepit old age. Therefore, open your eyes to vigilance and consider and amend all the negligences of these ages by working, so that you may live forever.

Letter 143: R143: Provost B. von Knechtsteden to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Provost in Knechtsteden, to Hildegard.

B., by the grace of God, a simple provost in Knechtsteden, to the venerable handmaid of Christ, Hildegard, may you be strengthened by the grace of the Holy Spirit and be completed in a blessed end. If it were possible for me to be present and to converse with you in alternating discourse, I would wish for it in every way. For I would explain to you in fuller detail the matters concerning me, which the Lord alone knows, but I did not want to commit each detail to this present place for the sake of brevity. The grace, most beloved, which we have heard the Father of lights, from whom comes every good and perfect gift, has bestowed upon you, in which I have much confidence, prompted me to convey the sweetness of your charity to these present matters. I earnestly beseech you not to cease to implore divine mercy with devoted prayers for my miseries, for I know I have offended Him in many ways, and I feel that I have not done so without consequence. Therefore, because I have known the grace in you and have greater hope, I have deemed it useful to implore the help of your prayers that can be heard, hoping to receive from you some remedy of consolation, which for Christ's sake, I pray you do not omit in your writings, including how I might more effectively appease the offense against the divine majesty. Farewell always in Christ.

Letter 144: R144: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Provost B. von Knechtsteden

Response from Hildegard.

In a mystical vision, at the request of your words, I looked and heard a voice speaking to you thus: I liken you to a tree that produces its fruits in summer, whose fruit is somewhat harmed by storms and mists, and then is renewed again by the dew of heaven and the clear ether. In this manner is your mind, for when you have confidence in some prosperity, like producing fruits, you are wearied by the vicissitudes of your ways, like a storm, and also harmed by those under your charge, like mists. But you, sigh to God and say, "To You, Lord, I lift up my soul! My God, I trust in You, let me not be ashamed." For in You is the breath of life which God infinitely enlivened, and to which He gave the wings of rationality. Therefore, with these wings, through faith and good desire, fly to God, lifting up your soul to Him. Also, know your God, in whose knowledge you have existed, and from whom you have taken your beginning. Hence, ask Him to teach you His good things by the inspiration of His Spirit and to deliver you from adversities. Also, trust in Him so that you do not feel ashamed to place all your works before Him, and speak to Him as a son speaks to his father when being corrected, not forgetting his lineage in Him. I will gladly pray to God that by His grace He may graciously defend and deliver you from all excesses of restless ways and from other crimes and dangers that befall you.

Letter 145: R145: Provost G. von Frankfurt to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Provost in Frankfurt, to Hildegard.

To Hildegard, beloved lady in Christ, from G., in name only a provost in Frankfurt. After Martha's labor, may Mary's consolation be with you. With great longing, I have desired to behold your person, but various affairs have hindered us. Now, at least, God has granted us the ability to embrace and greet you through letters. We do not want you to be unaware of your name, your person, and to embrace and honor you with all diligence along with greetings! We pray to God for you as much as we can day and night. Therefore, we ask your clemency to mention me, a sinner, before the mercy of the divine majesty. Farewell, as long as it is said today in the heights.

Letter 146: R146: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Provost G. von Frankfurt

Response from Hildegard.

In a true vision, I saw and heard these words. The first light of the day glows, then the dawn is revealed, and sometimes it is also shrouded with the great change of clouds, and thus the north wind rises and brings great sighs, because the earlier times of the day were beautiful without the change of a storm. Hence, O man who has the knowledge of good and evil, be careful about what your habits and works are before God, from your childhood, so that the zeal of the Lord does not strike you! And that your soul, when it leaves your body, does not say, "Woe is me, where am I going, and where will I go, or what kind of days are these for me, and what works touch me?" Namely those that my body's mill has presented to me. Also, beware that you do not tremble when the heavenly citizens say to you, "See what kind of God He is." Now live forever.

Letter 147: R147: Provost C. von Bonn to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Provost in Bunna. To Hildegard.

To Hildegard, bride of Christ and most esteemed teacher of the sisters of St. Robert in Rupertsberg. C., the unworthy prepositus in Bunna, offers his service with all devotion. If the Lord, who alone is powerful, alone is good, alone is holy, alone is merciful, deems it worthy to incline the ear of His Majesty to the voice of any sinner—which I hold by faith—then my heart and mouth, with tireless cries, are raised up for you. I call upon God, the knower of all secrets, as my witness that from the moment I first heard of your goodness through the fame that preceded you, and later confirmed in you yourself, I have wholly turned towards your love. Likewise, if you deem it worthy, consider me a participant in all the good things I have said or done up to now. Therefore, I both hope and, in a certain obligation, even more so for the love of God and your goodness, demand this from you. Lastly, neither fire nor iron, nor water, nor the threat of any other fear or danger, nor even death itself, can diminish or in any way remove the integrity of my soul's love for you. Farewell.

Letter 148: R148: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Provost C. von Bonn

Response of Hildegard.

O man who loves the world and holds it according to your will and the understanding of your ways, you are like a storm that is rarely pure and not often perilous. This means that often in your affairs you are deprived of consolation, sometimes even overwhelmed by weariness and sadness, and oppressed by doubt in all your undertakings. Therefore, rise up and call upon the God of Israel, saying: "Test me, Lord, and try me! Burn my loins and my heart." This means, test me, Lord, through faith and hope so that faith may be my eye for seeing and hope the mirror of life. And try me in good obedience, like Abraham, so that I may act against my own will, abandoning it for your sake and entering into your commandments, becoming your diligent friend. Through all this, burn my loins, which overflow with sins from my conception, so that they do not seduce me, because I work against myself, but may I always burn in the fire of the Holy Spirit and from day to day desire your justice and ascend from virtue to virtue.

O man, your mind is also like a cloud that does not carry hail and rain but is divided by the sun. For due to the security of light words and manners, you do not have a cloud with hail like anger and a dispute like rain, but you falter in good works with the desire for heavenly things. Therefore, purify your desire with the fear of God in good work and in this way kiss God, saying: "Incline your ear, Lord, and hear me, for I am poor and needy." For when you do good works by touching God through the kiss of divine love, immediately He inclines His ear to your desire and prayer and fulfills it, just as the word resounds through hearing. For you are in great need and require the help of God and also in great poverty because you lack the ability to accomplish good. But may God perfect this in you.

Letter 149: R149: Provost G. to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

A certain provost to Hildegard.

To Lady Hildegard, true servant of God, of the monastery of Saint Robert. G., holding the office of prelate, whatever the prayer of a poor sinner may avail. Since anyone who is wounded by deadly poison, like a deer hastening to the true fountain—that is, Christ—casts off the harmful poison from himself, I, burdened with such troubles, hasten to the fountain which God has deigned to reveal to us through His Spirit, seeking a remedy. For I do not doubt that you are aware how quickly almost all formerly held religion has perished, how shamelessly hateful presumption has taken its place. Therefore, since the church falters in apostolic dignity and name, and truthfully does not know to what head it should look, because anyone who wanders takes an example from it, abhorring the religion of good conduct, those who are led by the Spirit of God are greatly concerned about what their end should be in the will of God. Therefore, having taken good counsel, I flee to you and urgently ask that whatever you, taught by the Spirit, think about this or about myself, you would be willing to write back to me. For I am ready to obey your counsel in all things.

Letter 150: R150: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Provost G.

Response of Hildegard.

In a vision which I have seen with a vigilant eye in my spirit since my infancy, by a different path than that by which I was born into this world, I looked up and saw and heard these words to say to you: Your mind is like a plow that turns over and divides hard, rough, and soft things. You, indeed, seek to know, turn over, and divide those things which are so hard that you cannot break them, and which are so rough that they would wound you if you touched them, and which are so soft that you would crush them if you touched them harshly and roughly. The hardness that has limped away from the sun of justice now surrounds the church, which you cannot pierce.

Therefore, say to God in your heart: "Lord, who knows all things, I want to obey my teachers as long as they do not compel me to resist the Catholic faith." For the apostolic power, which is now divided into two parts, refuses to bind its own property, and the princes of the world are in such roughness that they would not listen to you if you told them what you know to be just. And the disciples of the teachings now follow such softness that you would hesitate, as if ignorant, about what to do with them. For a teacher should teach holy and just things and show good examples, just as Christ did, to whom many ran and from whom many fled. Yet He gathered His beloved and chosen ones. Therefore, hold firmly to those who kiss you through obedience and embrace you through charity, and do not leave them! But leave others to God so that you may say with the prophet: "I have proclaimed your truth and your salvation."

Therefore, direct your hope to the one God, because He will not abandon His church. This is the hope of the church, that it will be made clear-sighted, and this hope is secure, although sorrow may last long, in which many congregations of the spiritual will be

disturbed and many will also be destroyed. But I see the dawn like brightness in you, for the zeal for good works in good will is in you. Yet there is also a whirlwind running through you because of these and other changes, which sometimes clouds the brightness in you. Lessen this and have confidence that you will end in God, and you will live forever.

Letter 151: R151: Adelheid von Gandersheim to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

To Hildegard from Adelheid, abbess.

Adelheid, abbess of the church of Gandersheim, though unworthy, sends greetings to Hildegard, beloved mother of Saint Rupert, the free spouse of Jerusalem, and kisses from the Bridegroom. A good tree is known by its good fruit and should never be forgotten, for by bearing sweet fruit, it has earned the sweet love of good people. Therefore, one will be rightly considered inferior to a brute animal if they embrace good sweet things less well. You, therefore, Christ's dove, unseduced, but with a great and pure heart, do not let good become evil, light become darkness, or sweet become bitter, and thus you do not depart from my heart. Hence, you should also frequently remember me, as it is certain that I am united with you by the closeness of love and deep devotion.

I do not want the flower of ancient nourishment, which once flourished between you and me when you sweetly raised me, to wither in your heart. For the love of this and the charity of your beloved spouse, I beseech and pray that your prayers and supplications be made to God for me, my flock, and the place entrusted to me with your permission. And please commit us to the prayers of all your sisters. I also ask that you obtain for my sisters the fellowship of your sisterhood among your sisters, and indeed mine. When someone from your community comes to us, please send letters to let me know what you wish in Christ. Moreover, when time permits, if it pleases God, I will not delay to come to you so that we may speak face to face, work together hand in hand for good, and thus strengthen the ancient association confirmed in us by God's love.

You who dwell in the gardens, listen, and greet all your companions,
namely my sisters, most intimately for me, and cheer me with
commendatory letters.

Letter 152: R152: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Adelheid von Gandersheim

Response of Hildegard.

O daughter of God, in great anxiety, your mind is occupied by two paths. For through one anxiety, you waste away as if you despair of your life. Hence, when you sometimes ascend the mountain of confident faith to God, you question Him as if you do not know what to do in this doubt. But you, with pure faith, by doing good works, walk in the day of your prosperity and give to God what is His. For you see the sun, that is, the honor which God has not yet taken away from you, and you hold the world in sighing and in fear of the law of God, like the moon at night. Therefore, serve God in both parts, because He wants your sacrifice and asks for good works from you in your life before you die. May the light of God's grace cover you and anoint you with the oil of His mercy, with which David was anointed when he confessed his sins and saw God. May He also anoint you with the oil of the greenness of the Holy Spirit and make good and holy works in you through that devotion with which true worshipers worship God. Observe the commandments of God, and you will live forever.

Letter 153: R153: Abbess G. von N. to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

A certain abbess to Hildegard.

To the most beloved Lady Hildegard and dearest mother in Christ. G., abbess though unworthy, of the sisters of the church of N., to see the King of Glory in His beauty and to rejoice with Him forever. Blessed be God, who deigns to wonderfully declare to the world, through you, the mysteries of His secrets never before heard in our times, and who, through you, O most holy mother, confirms our faith and ineffably illuminates His holy church with more radiant virtues of His signs than usual, like some new rays of the sun. O, who has ever heard such things? Who has seen such things? Therefore, let each of us say, let all of us say, blessed be God.

I ardently desire to see the face of your holiness and to hear divine words from your mouth, but because I cannot fulfill this through the presence of the body at this time due to the urgency of place and circumstance, I will always see you with my heart and mind, and I will always love you. I also pray to your holiness, O most holy mother, that you may deign to intercede for me, a sinner, and for our congregation, which supplicates to you with me, to God, who undoubtedly hears you. Know also that your memory will always be in blessing with us, and the name of the Lord will be magnified through you. Pray for us, most pious mother and lady.

Above all, we ask you, both for God and for maternal affection, that you do not delay in sending us letters of your consolation soon. May Christ our Lord deign to gather us with you in His kingdom.

Letter 154: R154: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Abbess G. von N

Response of Hildegard.

Take care that your mind does not become unstable and restless, where a cloud of sapphire color cannot appear and often obscures the light of the sun. Have great diligence to stand in stability, and do not delve into every vain and foolish inquiry. For those who do so fall, deceived by the lack of love for Christ, just as a cloud of sapphire is obscured by the unstable and restless mind.

Seek the embrace of Christ, and seek all good things from Him. Make your works manifest to Him, and He will give you blessedness, for without Him, the salvation of man is vain. Grace and salvation are not obtained through man but through God, where the holy scriptures, flowing from the divine fountain, offer breasts for men to suckle.

Therefore, learn to flee from this vanity that obscures the light of the sun, that is, which separates man from Christ. Then you will live forever and be crowned by Christ.

Letter 155: R155: Abbess M. von Wechterswinkel to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

To Hildegard from the abbess in Weiterswinkel.

To Hildegard, the most beloved Lady and Mother, and most worthy of all praise, M., called by the grace of God, abbess in Weiterswinkel, with all her sisters, sends filial love and complete submission. Since we have come to know that the fragrance of your holiness, spread far and wide over the world by the grace of God, has grown so greatly that now the marks of your virtues are commended with worthy veneration by all the children of the Church throughout the world, we also, though unworthy, desiring to be inscribed as daughters of your special love, rejoice in every way as much as we can for the greatness of your dignity.

Therefore, sweetest mother, with the full affection of our hearts, we implore your holiness to deign to receive us as your children and to shelter us under the protection of your holy prayers so that, aided by your most holy merits, we may finally be worthy to reach the goal of the path we have undertaken. I, however, who seem to excel others not by merits but by the dignity of my title alone, commit myself to your holiness with singular devotion through earnest prayers, praying that through the pious intervention of your prayers, I may be able to care for the sheep entrusted to me in such a way that together with them, I may be made a partner in eternal life.

Know that I have always wished to receive something from you by which I could keep your memory, namely, admonitory letters, which for the love of God I will always observe with a willing heart. Some of our sisters, embracing you with special love, commend themselves to your purest prayers in all things.

Letter 156: R156: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Abbess M. von Wechterswinkel

Response of Hildegard.

The living light says: A dry stable is useless, and soil that is excessively broken by the plow will not yield proper fruit because it lacks the correct measure of its turning. And dry soil that is rocky brings forth thorns and other useless plants. Similarly, unsuitable abstinence, which does not have the right measure and proper state, weakens the human body because it is not given the greenness of proper nourishment. Hence, a person withers. Where this happens, surely the virtues of humility and charity, which are like the most beautiful flowers, will perish, for excessive abstinence lacks the greenness of virtues, but instead, there grows a windy fame of uselessness, and there arise many terrors as if they were holy, but they are not holy.

Those who are in this vanity have anger and not peace, and they are useless in many of their ways. A person who wants to have a regal life in a spiritual habit should waste away in delicate feasts of unsuitable foods, from which lasciviousness arises, and waste away in the strongest wine, in which luxury pulses, and other moving evils, having no health. Chaste people, loving their souls, should avoid these, but should use proper grain and drink that does not burn with the fire of its heat. What I have given to humans for nourishment, I do not take away from them, but I do not know horrible foods because vanity is in them. But still, no soul should flee to me through unsuitable abstinence, but a person should adhere to me in the right measure, and I will receive them. Nor should any person strive with the gnashing of their teeth for an unearned reward in works, because I give to each one a just reward according to their merits as they love me.

Letter 157: R157: Abbess B. von Elten to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

To Hildegard from the abbess in Elten.

To the Lady and Mother Hildegard, beloved and venerable in Christ and in her intimate love, B., abbess though unworthy of Elten, and penitent sinner, sitting at the feet of Jesus with Mary, to see her beloved as He is.

I congratulate your blessedness, most beloved of all women, who, as can be evidently proven, have found the One whom your soul loves as much as is possible for mortals, and now, happily dwelling with Him in the secret chamber of your heart, taste and see that the Lord is sweet. Because I perceive this to be so, I must bear with equanimity the fact that for a long time now you have neglected to visit me with your letters, though I am so devoted to you. For I believe that if you could for even a moment divert the gaze of your mind from the sight of your Beloved and move your foot outside the dwelling of quiet, you would certainly not fail to comfort me often through your messenger, who would both gladden me with news of your state and report to you about me.

For although it may not be granted to me to see your beloved face again in this life, which I cannot say without tears, I will always be joyful about you, as I have resolved to love you as my own soul. Therefore, I will see you with the eye of prayer until we reach that place where we may see each other eternally and deserve to embrace our Beloved face to face in His beauty.

Letter 158: R158: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Abbess B. von Elten

Response of Hildegard.

O you who are a teacher in the radiance of the springing fountain that is in the place of Christ, listen. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah has triumphed, the root of David. This means: the Son, the splendor of the holy divinity, is like the root of strength, and He roars like a lion when He casts those who imitate the first angel in his fall into hell, driving away all injustice from Himself with gnashing teeth. All who confess Him in faith and touch Him with good works, He draws to Himself, and thus, He conquers all like a lion.

Now listen to me, you who draw near. God has established one way for all to walk in it, but two men stood at the side of this way. One said to the other, "I walk in the streets as gladly as in the way." And the other said, "So do I." And then they looked at the thorns and briars, and they desired them. And the Lord said to them, "These do not want me, nor do they want to fight under my banner; therefore, they are cut off from me." And soldiers from the east, very well-armed, came saying, "We want to walk in this way." And the Lord gave them the wings of an architect, and cherubim looked upon them with their eyes. And they shone with that light and became so strong from that same light that they could not be satisfied with the struggle of the good fight.

But other men became weary in a short time and perished because they were not fed with the food of life. Therefore, O dear daughter of God, look to those militant soldiers so that you may be with them in some part, and you will live forever.

Letter 159: R159: Sophia von Oudwijk to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

To Hildegard from the abbess in Oudwijk.

To the blessed memory of Hildegard of Saint Robert, S., abbess in name only of the church in Oudwijk of Maastricht, I wish to enter the choir illuminated by the light of lights. Because no one can renounce worldly desires and long with all their intention for the heavenly homeland unless it is given to them from above with the aid of Christ, I wish to inform you of what I have conceived in my soul by God's prompting and the cooperation of His Spirit. Our Lord, who does not want any of His sheep to stray but, as a good shepherd, desires to bring all back to the path of eternal salvation, has inspired my heart, I believe, to leave behind the burden of governance that I bear heavily and to enclose myself in the solitude of a small cell.

The desire for this intention is with me, but the ability and completion lie in the power of our Lord. Therefore, knowing that you have such merit before God that you can know by the revelation of the Holy Spirit what is expedient for a person to do, I humbly beseech your compassion to consult the Lord for me, to see if this way of life is pleasing to Him, so that I may not be marked by that Gregorian sentence which says, "It would have been better for them not to have known the way of truth than, after knowing it, to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them."

May you be well in the Lord, and may your compassion not refuse to indicate to me through the bearer of this letter what you have determined from the grace of God through His Holy Spirit.

Letter 160: R160: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Sophia von Oudwijk

Response of Hildegard.

In the true vision of the mysteries of God, hear these words: O daughter, born from the side of man and shaped in the image of God's creation, why do you wither away, so that your mind flies in the changeability of clouds which the storm carries around, shining like light at times and at times darkened? Such is your mind due to the noise of those ways that do not shine before God. But you say, "I want to rest and seek a place where my heart can have a nest, so that my soul may rest there too." O daughter, it is not useful before God for you to cast off your burden and leave your flock, when you have the light by which you can shine for them and lead them to pastures.

Now restrain yourself so that your mind does not burn with this sweetness that greatly harms you in the changeability of solitary life. You must live, because the grace of God wills you to. Be careful, therefore, not to withdraw from it in the wandering of your mind. May God help you to be vigilant in pure knowledge.

Letter 161: R161: Sophia von Kitzingen to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

To Hildegard from the abbess in Kitzingen.

To Hildegard, teacher of spiritual virtues of unique merit, adorned with sapphires, S., called abbess in Kitzingen but profiting little herself, offers the unceasing service of prayer. Having heard the prerogative of your holiness with swift wings, I fly to the bosom of your charity, desiring to be commended to you for light, you who have merited to be revealed as a light to the nations through the true light.

For who would not delight in the chambers of Mother Wisdom? Who would not willingly lend an ear to heavenly harmony? Or who would not wish to hear the organ of the Holy Spirit, adorned with so many tones of virtues and mystically marked with so many engravings of miracles? Indeed, this sound has gone out into all the earth, whose harmony the Spirit proceeding from the Father has seasoned. Therefore, cry out in strength, you who proclaim peace broadly. And all nations will come to you, offering gifts of praise beyond the rivers of Ethiopia. For I too, though not according to the prize, yet according to hope, run to the stadium, because, according to the apostle, it is neither of the willing nor of the running, but of God who shows mercy. For whoever grasps a part of your most holy prayer, which you freely offer to all due to proximity and love of God, brings with them a noble nun, namely, a praiseworthy sister of the most perfect, an acceptable one, whom the heavenly Father has spiritually begotten to me, desiring no less for her than for myself the knowledge of you, venerable and worthy of all praise, Mother.

Let your voice sound in my ears and tell me, divinely, what is more beneficial, whether I should abandon the burden I carry or bear it longer, as I seek your advice.

Letter 162: R162: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Sophia von Kitzingen

Response of Hildegard.

O Sophia, I speak to you in a mystical vision. May your soul be strengthened by God, touching God with right aspiration. It is good for you to carry the burden of your labor which you have undertaken in God, provided that the sheep are willing to hear the admonition of God through your guidance. And if any spark glimmers in them, do not abandon them, lest the predator snatches them away.

May your soul shine in God, and may your days burn in the fiery Giver. Trust in the Lord and be diligent for yourself and your daughters according to the commandment of God and the devotion which God has given and continues to give you in the embrace of His love. For you should hold this world in your heart as if you were a pilgrim. May God help you to become a living stone in the heavenly Jerusalem.

Letter 163: R163: Abbess R. von Niedermünster in Regensburg to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

To Hildegard from the abbess of Saint Mary in Regensburg.

R., by the grace of God, the humble dispenser of those serving at the lower monastery of Saint Mary in Regensburg, to her special friend Hildegard, whatever continuous prayer and the devotion of worthy service accomplish.

If the manner and place of serving you are denied to me, my affection still employs the remedy of desiring to hear of the well-being of both your inner and outer selves as soon as possible through transmitted letters. Know, dearest one, that although the rugged mountains and the depths of the springs separate me from your presence, my heart is joined to you in the goodwill of perfect faith and love. The knowledge of you, which I long for, and the happiness of the one who seeks your well-being, I ascribe not to my merits but to the gratuitous kindness of God, who lovingly works with His faithful ones.

Nevertheless, believe that I do not abuse your friendship because I fully enjoy it when, by the grace of God, I am called to the sweetness of inner delight, and I dare or am able to converse with Him more familiarly. Under the comfort of the same love, I ask that you make me experience certain signs through your letters, if according to my request and promise, the memory of me has any value with you afterwards.

In the grace and permission of yours, I faithfully and lovingly greet our sisters with the service of due homage, who, taking up the strength of God's fortitude in spirit, have stood beneficially for me and, so to speak, have saved me from falling into the point of death through your good deeds. Farewell.

Letter 164: R164: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Abbess R. von Niedermünster in Regensburg

Response of Hildegard.

O daughter of God, in the formation of the first man, approach your Father and look upon Him so that you may do His will, for He created you. In the near future, He has admonished you through chastisement and will still warn you for some reason that I see in you, which is good for you to avoid. Therefore, always look to God and make all your ways known to Him, and imitate the dove of piety. For it bears witness to every good work and has the sorrow of exile from labors.

In this, learn to have a pure mind, and when your mind roams in restlessness, comprehending many things it cannot accomplish, stand in stability and learn moderation, for the dove is also moderate and stable. When vehement anger tires you, look to the pure fountain of patience, and the anger will soon end, and the storm and wave of fluctuating water will cease, for the dove is patient. But when you are in weariness, which is when natural motion shakes you, consider the exile of this life. And when you also long for another life in expectation, do this according to the dove's sorrow, and gather each useful thing from other good people and live according to the example of the dove, so that you may live forever.

Letter 165: R165: Abbess H. von Kaufungen an Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Abbess in Kaufungen, to Hildegard.

To the lady and sister Hildegard, the sinner H., and in name alone abbess in Kaufungen, to not hide the light of knowledge under the bushel of silence. The unexpected haste of this message prevented me from writing to you, my lady and mother, in any polished manner. Instead, I convey words spoken aloud, as to a beloved sister. Therefore, accept this as such. It has become well-known among all the people, that flying volume given to the prophet as food, to rest in your mouth as a wise one. Oh, how precious is this treasure.

Therefore, be careful not to gulp it down with a fool. Hurry, arouse the church, indeed the leaders of the church! To whom it is said in Peter, Simon, could you not watch with me one hour? For the rod from the north, vigilant against iniquity, we see you have, and we rejoice and tremble. Thus, we desire to receive your comforting letters. Farewell in Christ! Always remember me in your prayers, so that I may be deemed worthy to share in the grace that is in you.

Letter 166: R166: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Abess H. von Kaufungen

Response of Hildegard.

In the spirit, I truly say to you: Guard your soul so that it is not stained with iniquity, and gird your body with the justice of God. And do this before the day of your death, because afterwards you will find no remedy, except as much as you may find through the grace of God and the adornment of your works. For your enemy, the hawk, circles around, tempting how it might wound your soul. Guard yourself from it through the pursuit of good works and the abstinence from sins, because your days do not have long durations. Therefore, may the Holy Spirit kindle its fire in you, so that you remember these words. Again, I say to you this parable: Trees wither in winter, and flourish in summer, and produce their fruits. Consider this with your mind, how long you are in the winter through the transgression of spiritual life, and through the change of your ways, run swiftly to the greenness of the Holy Spirit, which is summer, and thus produce flowers. And gather your sheaves as quickly as you can, and in the meantime guard yourself from sins. Because in truth I say to you, if you seek the grace of God, it will not flee from you.

Letter 167: R167: Abbess R. von Gerbstedt to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Abbess in Gerbstedt, to Hildegard.

To the venerable lady Hildegard, the burning and shining lamp. R., by the grace of God, though unworthy, abbess in Gerbstedt, run in such a way in the race that you may grasp the eternal prize. For, as the apostle testifies, each one is a member of the other. All the children of the church must greatly rejoice that the fame of your holiness is flying everywhere, spreading the fragrance of your virtues throughout the entire church. This scent has also reached our parts, prompting our hearts not a little to give thanks to the author of all good. Therefore, I, the least of the faithful, desiring to share in your merits, pray most earnestly that I may be deemed worthy to partake in the constancy of your prayers. If you hear this petition, I promise to offer my prayers, though very humble, with the greatest willingness for you. Moreover, I ask your kindness, beloved lady, to send me some of your words, so that I may always serve them with all devotion! Furthermore, may your memory flourish among us all the more abundantly as your kindness brings us joy through these. Farewell.

Letter 168: R168: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Abbess R. von Gerbstedt

Response of Hildegard.

You, daughter of God, ascend in the nights through the four elements, which accomplish all works during the day. For the night brings sorrow through darkness, and the day brings joy through light. For it is written, "Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night shows knowledge." This means: God is that day which is never darkened, and which never changes through the ages of ages, and He chose for Himself the clear light from light, for He made His creation whole, namely, man with all that belongs to him. But the serpent came and seduced the woman with his words, and she accepted it and inclined herself to the serpent. And what she tasted from the serpent, she gave to her husband, and it remained in him, for man accomplishes all works fully. But God did not command this to happen, rather the serpent deceived the woman with flattering and playful words. Thus, the taste of the flesh was received from the serpent; therefore, he is slippery and light and deceitful as the serpent's counsel is. For the serpent hid the curse in his deception, for if he had shown man his perdition, he would not have consented to his counsel. And as man has the knowledge of good and evil, so the serpent has deceit and curse. But thereafter, the swift deer and strong lion had it in his chamber to divide these things. For God chose the virginal matter for Himself, in which He prepared humanity by His word, for the virgin does not know the taste of fleshly mingling, and so the Word of God was made man from a foreign element. Thus, man Christ advanced day by day and deceived the serpent, who had blasphemed man. For the day, namely Christ, overcame all the harmful things of the night, because He washed away the taste of the flesh, which the serpent had deceitfully placed in man, through amended penitence, and made man a

stranger in this way, when He gathered him to Himself as His own member. The serpent also, with his deceit, in which he hides malice, often wounds many and makes them doubtful so that they do not know God, thus tearing them apart without faith and without hope. Many, however, fight against this, saying, "My Creator will not destroy me unless I perish for my sins." This struggle is likened to the tortures of martyrs and the pain of Christ's wounds. The first woman was the night mentioned above, and she showed knowledge to her husband, namely to man. You, daughter of God, make yourself beautiful through the martyrdom of good works, so that your soul may shine in God.

Letter 169: R169: Abbess B. von St. Cyriakus in Erfurt to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Abbess of St. Cyriakus in Erfurt, to Hildegard.

To Hildegard, the mirror of holiness. B., unworthy abbess of the handmaids of Christ residing on the mountain of St. Cyriakus in Erfurt, may you enjoy the joys of eternal brightness. Glorious things are spoken of you, servant of God. Therefore, I ask you to extend your hand in prayer for me, burdened with the weight of sins, imitating your beloved who stretched out his hand to the leper. For I have known that you are anointed with the oil of gladness above your companions. Hence, I beseech you on bended knees, that when you have comprehended those heavenly and eternal things, and have entered the holy of holies, you may sympathize with my miseries, interceding with your spouse and mine for me, a poor little one, and reconciling my excesses to his grace. How could you, beloved of Christ, possess charity if you refuse to sympathize with the infirmities of others? Therefore, let me be commended to your holiness along with the sisters entrusted to me, and pray that our feet may stand on the straight path, so that we, walking perfectly, may reach the day of gladness. Intercede with him who hides us in the secret of his face from the disturbance of men, that he may deign to protect us in his tabernacle from the contradiction of tongues, and grant us the will and the ability to fulfill his commands, who keeps truth forever. Therefore, we designate the fullness of our fraternity to your holiness, and earnestly ask to have the certainty of your prayer. May the glory of your holiness flourish and prevail. Farewell.

Letter 170: R170: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Abbess B. von St. Cyriakus in Erfurt

Response of Hildegard.

O daughter of God, you are surrounded by the love of Christ, yet you are constrained by the bitterness of your body in battles, and you rebel against the devil by resisting. I see the construction of the people with whom you are pleasing to God, and ascending strenuously to a better part, and being more edified in good conduct than it was established. Therefore, let your soul exult in God and remain devoted in Him. However, you do not know nor will you be able to think of breaking the chains of those bound, namely those who walk in the path of mockery. How? A man looked up to a great tower so as not to move, but he could not prevent this and cried out in restless clamors, "Woe, woe." And so he was led into the mockery of the people saying, "What will it benefit you to always fight against those who do not want you?" Look up to the high mountain, to Him who responds to you with diligent love, "My daughter, what do you want? I will fulfill everything you ask for your soul." Therefore, cease from a restless mind, and assume peace for yourself. For I see in true light that this is beneficial to your soul. But take care that you keep your land with diligence and do not break it, lest the greenness of the herbs and the strength of the spices be worn out by the plow of labor and cannot sprout. Often I see that when a person afflicts his body through excessive abstinence, weariness arises in him, and vices are entangled in weariness more than if he had nourished it justly. But because a benevolent soul of charity is established in you, take care not to frequently see that which commands the flesh to be wounded, but rightly apply the times of healing ointments to yourself so that you may live eternally. I see your soul shining very brightly in pure light.

Letter 171: R171: Abess D. von Lippoldsberg to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Abbess in Lippoldsberg, to Hildegard.

To Hildegard, the bride of Christ on the mountain of Saint Robert! D., the humble governess of the sisters in Lippoldsberg, a pious prayer in Christ. With what great longing I have long desired and still desire to see your face and rejoice in your conversation, as the searcher of hearts and reins, God, knows! Nevertheless, my sins have always impeded me from achieving the fulfillment of my desire. However, because I have often known many to have received consolation through your letters, even though they did not happen to see your face, I, a sinner, likewise hoping the same, have dared to seek your counsel through this present letter, if perhaps by divine mercy, through your kindness, my affliction may be consoled. Indeed, the contrition of my heart is manifold, which I earnestly wish to be alleviated through you with all my innermost being.

Letter 172: R172: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Abess D. von Lippoldsberg

Response of Hildegard.

The day clarifies the light, and the night covers with darkness. If, however, the night were to fight against the day, it would not be able to extinguish it. But if the day wanted to overcome the night, it would have the possibility of conquering it. May the true light be with you, which God foresaw for man on the first day. For the Father loves the Son, even though He sees Him going out, yet He does not seek the times of times for sinning, as if God does not exist. God sees your soul in the wandering of your mind, but your mind mocks those illicit acts of sinning that tear the soul apart. Hence, I see you like the radiant splendor of the sun through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, not touching at all the exile of perdition, but looking at the sun like an eagle through penance, which is the sweetest mother. Therefore, God loves you very much. Now, live forever.

Letter 173: R173: Abess H. to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

A certain abbess. To Hildegard.

To the venerable and beloved in Christ, Hildegard. H., a sinner and abbess in name only of the sisters in [missing], prayer and communion of all works done or to be done in praise of God. We know, dearest one, that you have always been prudent in all things and have not yet failed in this. Therefore, we ask that you kindly receive our letters and hear what they contain. For we complain to your holiness that we are often attacked by the temptations of evil spirits and are inclined to various directions. And unless we are strengthened by God's help, we are oppressed by their storms. Therefore, we implore your holiness again and again, and even a third time, that for eternal reward you may assist us with the counsel of your kindness. And whatever you decide regarding this matter, please communicate not by spoken word, but by letters through the bearer of this message.

Letter 174: R174: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Abbess H.

Response of Hildegard.

O daughter of Adam, in true vision I have been taught this: Whoever does this, namely forsakes the desires of their body, is likened to Abraham, who left his homeland, and to the wise man who builds his house upon the rock. For the person who in this earthly life cultivates another life is proven to live an angelic life, because the tempest of this world does not move him, nor is he brought down by the terrors of diabolical deception. But just as Abraham left his homeland and obeyed God's commands, so this person forsakes their carnal desires and obeys God's commands through almsgiving and prayers and other good works. Yet it must be foreseen that the person remains stable in these good deeds, lest they be seduced by the devil, who deceived the first man and stripped him of his glory. In all his good works, he must also obey the teachings of the heavenly judges, whose tongues have been made the keys of heaven. May God complete the victory of this battle in you, so that you may be praised by the angels and the saints may rejoice, and that you too may be received into eternal joys.

Letter 175: R175: Abbess S. von Widergoldesdorff to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Abbess in Widergoldesdorff, to Hildegard.

To her lady Hildegard, the pious mother of the handmaids of Christ serving the Lord God at the blessed Robert. S., the humble servant and called governess of the sisters serving God and the blessed Mary at Widergoldesdorff, [sends] heartfelt affection and devoted service. I know, my lady, that all your ways are mercy and truth, and this is deserved, because the mercy that brought the Son of God from heaven to earth has looked upon you, and heavenly wisdom has prepared its seat in you. Therefore, most sweet lady, I earnestly supplicate you to deign to inquire of God whether it is His will that I should bear this burden or cast it off! For I have persisted more out of the constraint of obedience than out of love for God. Therefore, if I dared, I would gladly leave the place of authority, for it seems very hard to me to serve all the ways of others and to remain in their will, and thus I do not hope to receive any reward. Farewell. To a wise mind, few words are sufficient.

Letter 176: R176: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Abbess S. von Widergoldesdorff

Response of Hildegard.

A man who is so knowledgeable that he can sustain the heavens is very strong, and the great gift of God is in him. This is the meaning: No person should flee who is capable of sustaining the congregation of saints by the rod of God. O daughter of God, may He inspire you with His gift, so that you may diligently carry His light. For there is a certain nature of man that, in his first beginning, ascends like smoke, and this brings pain and bitterness. Many thoughts, fears, and doubts are entangled with this. You, daughter, have this martyrdom, and in it, you endure anguish, fear, and pain in the righteousness of life. Yet, in this way, many saints come to God as martyrs. Therefore, trust in God because He will not abandon you, and may the Holy Spirit lessen your pain.

Letter 177: R177: Hazecha von Krauftal to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Hazecha, abbess of Krauftal, to Hildegard.

To Hildegard, the prudent steward of the house of the Supreme Father. Hazecha, the humble and unworthy abbess of Krauftal, [sends] maternal reverence and filial devotion, with the love in which we are united in Christ. After having long desired your presence and affability, I was relieved by God's help from the pusillanimity of spirit and the previous tempest for a while! And because I do not doubt that your words proceed not from human ingenuity, but from the true light that illuminates you more than other people, I have delayed completing what I proposed to do with your counsel. I want you to know, dearest lady and sister, that just as I greatly desired to see you before, I still desire it no less now. And though I cannot with my body, I always cling to you with my heart. And since it is certain that charity is in you, and you remain in charity, I beseech you through it, that whatever the living light through its spirit reveals to you about me as worthy of correction or reproof, do not hesitate to write to me.

Letter 178: R178: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Hazecha von Krauftal

Response of Hildegard.

He who sees all says: You have eyes to see and to look around everywhere. Where you see mud, wash it away; and make what is dry green, and give flavor to the spices you have. If you did not have eyes, you could excuse yourself, but you have eyes! And why do you not look around with them? You have eloquence in rationality. For you often judge others in things in which you do not wish to be judged yourself, but sometimes you wisely bring forth what you say. Therefore, see that you rightly bear your burden and gather good works into the pouch of your heart, lest you fail. For in the solitary life that the sound of your words requires, you would not be able to rest because of the diversities of your ways, since your latter state would then become much worse than the former, and even as grievous as the loss of a stone. Imitate the turtle dove in chastity, and diligently care for the chosen vineyard, so that you may look upon God with a right and pure face.

Letter 179: R179: Lucardis von Bamberg to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Lucardis, abbess in Bamberg, to Hildegard.

To Hildegard, the beloved lady and mother, venerable in religion and dignity. Lucardis, though unworthy, called abbess in Bamberg, along with all those entrusted to her by God, [sends] whatever the prayers of the humble can achieve. We rejoice with your blessedness in Christ as much as we are able, for the Lord who foreknew and chose you has illuminated and filled you with the spirit of prophecy in our times. Therefore, Christ has especially gladdened us in this, that He foresaw and predestined you from the female sex for this purpose, and through His grace, has enlightened many through your teaching. For this, we give the greatest thanks to Him for you, and with humble supplication, we beseech Him to mercifully complete what He has begun in you until He leads you to the eternal. We therefore earnestly ask that you deign to receive us into the fellowship of your fraternity, and that you may strive to commend us to your holy community, and strengthen us with your admonitory letters. May your love be well.

Letter 180: R180: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Lucardis von Bamberg

Response of Hildegard.

O mother, a man who does not till the field that holds the fullness of fruitfulness nor makes it fruitful neglects it because he does not labor for the reward of the householder. For who has appointed the ox and the donkey? Indeed, God created them for the service of man. And why does a man not labor for his own benefit, when he himself is the entire work of God, and when God did not make him empty? For God made man similar to the firmament, which bears the sun, moon, and stars so that they may shine upon all creation and show the times of the ages. But if all these were covered by a black cloud, the creature would fear it was coming to an end. You, daughter of God, recognize this field as yourself because, due to your benevolence, you have embraced the people so that they can receive your words and deeds. Therefore, do not flee from laboring with them, nor neglect due to idle leisure, because useless weeds often grow in idleness. Propose also the vision of the firmament to yourself so that the light of your reason does not darken, hiding iniquities by the deceiving devil, as if you scarcely live. And in all these things, constrain your daughters in discipline, because just as a child fears being struck by the rod, so must a master be feared by all. However, do not fear affliction in these matters, but increase your rewards in eternal life with it so that the breath of the Holy Spirit may flow in you.

Letter 181: R181: Abbess H. von Altmünster in Mainz to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Abbess in the old monastery of the Mainz church, to Hildegard.

To her lady Hildegard, the virgin dedicated to God. H., abbess in name only of the sisters in the old monastery of the Mainz church, [wishes] the blessedness of heavenly life after prolonged illness. If, my lady, you have recovered somewhat from your infirmity, I rejoice! If not, I deeply grieve from the heart. Here I write to you with the boldness of familiarity, asking that you attend to my devotion towards you and strive to placate the face of the Lord for my sins. For I beseech you in the bond of charity to remind me through the bearer of these present letters, and to gladden me with your reply as the Holy Spirit grants you.

Letter 182: R182: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Abbess H. von Altmünster in Mainz

Response of Hildegard.

The will of God had almost laid me low as if my soul were sighing to leave this world. But the grace of God has now raised me somewhat in a new gift. For the mystical things of God, as I see in true vision, say: Whoever helps anyone suffering in my name, to them in my part the reward of praise will be given. Your mind burns as if it were sprinkled with fiery oil, hence you sometimes grow weary with grief as if you do not know what to do. Live in God and bear your burden as devoutly as your strength allows, and God will make it so that you persevere in His service.

Letter 183: R183: Abbess O. von Ilbenstadt to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Abbess in Ilbenstadt, to Hildegard.

Hildegard, my lady, from O., servant of Christ, unworthy governor in Ilbenstadt. Through this, as she has tasted intimately the heavenly gift to attain that perfect and good thing. Blessed Jesus Christ, whose good fragrance you are to God in every place! For now not the fragrance of balsam but the very substance of sacred ointment has flowed upon you, whose most sweet fragrance has so delighted your name in the hearts and ears of all that they together commend the signs of your humility and affability. And they glorify your Father who is in heaven in you. Therefore, blessed mother, grant pardon, and endure not a little bit of my folly, but my great folly. Allow me to open before you a little of the pain in my heart! And when you have heard, comfort, I beg, your servant. For I bear an unbearable weight, as I am commanded to correct the faults of my sisters! While I can scarcely avoid any dangers that beset me everywhere, however slightly. Therefore, when you have gone out to see King Solomon in his splendor, remember these things I have asked of you with all my heart. Farewell.

Letter 184: R184: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Abbess O. von Ilbenstadt

Response of Hildegard.

O daughter of God! As long as you have the ability, work among his daughters and in meekness sighing to God, observe your law. For your labor cries out and prays to God. Indeed, the man who works in the cave of God's justice and on the narrow path, yet consents to Adam's fall, and seeks penance for it, no one should doubt that after the scourges of penance, the gate of heaven will receive him. For whoever wisely disciplines the field of his body, sudden death will not harm him, because the symphony of the Holy Spirit and a joyful life will receive him! But one must beware that man does not kill his body through excessive labors, but rationally prohibit sins.

Daughter, remember that you do not have the power to create a man, hence pray gently to God, that he may give you a better life, and this is more acceptable to God than if you were to beseech him with excessive sadness. May God make you a temple of life.

Letter 185: R185: Elisabeth von Schönau to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Elisabeth, Mistress in Schönau, to Hildegard.

To Lady Hildegard, venerable mistress of the brides of Christ who are in Rupertsberg. Elisabeth, humble nun and mistress of the sisters in Schönau, devoted with all affection in prayers. May the grace and consolation of the Most High fill you with joy, because you have kindly shared in my troubles, as I understood from the words of my consoler! whom you diligently encouraged concerning my consolation. For as you said it was revealed to you about me! I truly confess that I recently conceived a certain cloud of trouble in my mind because of the unworthy words of people speaking many things about me that are not true. But I would easily endure the words of the common people if not also those who walk in the habit of religion. more bitterly grieve my spirit. For these too, I do not know with what spurs driven, mock the grace of the Lord in me! and rashly judge about things they do not know. I also hear that some carry around letters written from their own spirit under my name. They have slandered me as having prophesied about the day of judgment, which certainly I never presumed to do! since the coming of that day escapes the knowledge of all mortals. But I will explain to you the occasion of this fame, so that you may judge whether I have done or said anything presumptuously in this matter. As you have heard from others, the Lord magnified his mercy with me beyond what I have deserved or could in any way deserve, so much so that he has frequently deigned to reveal to me certain heavenly sacraments. He has also frequently indicated to me through his angel what would come upon his people in these days unless they repent of their iniquities, and commanded that I announce these things publicly. However, to avoid arrogance and not to appear as the author of novelties, I have endeavored to conceal all these things as

much as I could. Thus, one Sunday, as I was in a usual rapture of the mind, the angel of the Lord stood before me, saying: Why do you hide gold in the mud, that is, the word of God which has been sent through your mouth to earth, not to be hidden but to be manifested for the praise and glory of our Lord and for the salvation of his people? And having said this, he raised a scourge over me and in great wrath struck me very bitterly five times, so that for three days I languished in my whole body from that blow. After this, he placed his finger on my mouth, saying: You will be silent until the ninth hour, when you will reveal the things the Lord has worked with you. Therefore, I remained mute until the ninth hour. Then I informed the mistress to bring to me a certain little book which I had hidden in my bed, containing in part the things the Lord had done with me. When I offered it into the hands of the lord abbot who had come to visit me, my tongue was loosened in these words: Not to us, Lord, not to us, but to your name give glory. After this, when I revealed certain other things to him, which I had not wanted to commit to writing, namely concerning the great vengeance of the Lord which I had learned from the angel would soon come upon the whole world, I diligently asked him to keep that word hidden with him. He commanded me to devote myself to prayer and to ask the Lord to give me understanding whether he wanted the things I had spoken to be covered by silence or not. And when I had afflicted myself in prayer for some time concerning this matter, on the arrival of the Lord on the feast of Saint Barbara, in the first vigil of the night, I fell into a trance, and the angel of the Lord stood before me, saying: Cry out strongly and say alas to all nations, because the whole world has turned to darkness. And you will say: Come out! He who formed you from the earth has called you and says, Repent! for the kingdom of God is near. Induced by this word, the lord abbot began to proclaim the word before the magistrates of the church and religious men. Some of whom received the word with reverence, others not

so, but spoke sinisterly. It happened therefore that many, among whom this word was spread, throughout the whole time of Lent afflicted themselves with great fear through penance, and persisted in alms and prayers. At that time, someone, I do not know by what zeal driven, sent letters to the city of Cologne in the person of the lord abbot, although God knows he was unaware, in which terrible threats were read out to all the people hearing. Hence, although it was mocked by the onlookers, as we heard, the wise prudently considered the word and did not disdain to honor God with the fruits of penance. It happened, however, on the Wednesday before Easter, when after great labors of the body I came into a trance, the angel of the Lord appeared to me, and I said to him: Lord, what will become of the word you have spoken to me? Who responded: Do not grieve or be troubled if the things I predicted do not happen on the day I determined for you! for the Lord is appeased by the satisfaction of many. After this, on the Friday about the third hour, when I came into a trance with great suffering, the angel again stood before me, saying: The Lord has seen the affliction of his people! and has turned away his wrath of indignation from them. To which I said: Then, my Lord, will I not be mocked by all those among whom this word has been spread? Who said: Endure patiently and kindly all the things that happen to you on this occasion. Diligently consider him who, being the creator of the whole world, endured the mockeries of men. Now the Lord is testing your patience. Behold, my lady, I have explained the whole course of events to you, so that you may know my and our abbot's innocence! and may manifest it to others. I beseech you, however, to make me a participant in your prayers! and, as the Spirit of the Lord suggests to you, write back to me some consoling words. The grace of Christ be with you. Amen.

Letter 186: R186: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Elisabeth von Schönau

Response of Hildegard.

I, a poor and fragile vessel, speak these things not from myself, but from serene light. Man is a vessel that God has built for Himself and filled with His inspiration to perfect His works in it, for God does not work like man, but in His command, all things are made perfect. Herbs, trees, and woods appeared, the sun, moon, and stars proceeded in their service, and the waters produced fish and birds, and livestock and beasts arose! All these serve man as God appointed them. But only man did not know Him. For when God gave man great knowledge, man rose in his mind and turned away from God. For God had looked upon him so that He would perfect all His works in him! But the ancient deceiver tricked him and infected him with the crime of disobedience through the delight of an inappropriate wind, seeking more than he should. Oh, woe. Then all the elements were involved in the vicissitude of light and darkness, just as man did in the transgression of God's commandments. However, God watered certain men so that man would not be entirely derided. Abel was good, but Cain was a murderer. And many saw the mysteries of God in light, but others committed many sins until that time came when the word of God shone as it is said, beautiful in form above the sons of men. Then the sun of justice arose and illuminated men with good works in faith and in deed, just as the dawn first proceeds, and the other hours of the day follow, until night approaches. Thus, O daughter Elisabeth, the world changes. For now the world is weary in all greenness of virtues, that is, in the dawn, in the first, in the third, and in the very strong sixth hour of the day. And therefore, in this time it is necessary that God waters some men so that His instruments are not idle. Hear, O troubled daughter, for those men whom the inspiration

of God fills, the ambitious suggestion of the ancient serpent somewhat tires them. For when that serpent sees a beautiful gem, he immediately roars, saying, What is this? And he fatigues it with many miseries of a burning mind desiring to fly above the clouds as if they were gods, just as he does. Now hear again. Those who desire to perfect the works of God should always attend to the fact that they are clay vessels, for they are men! And always consider what they are and what they will be, and leave heavenly things to Him who is heavenly, for they are exiles ignorant of heavenly things, but only singing the mysteries of God like a trumpet that only gives sound and does not work! But in which another breathes to make it sound. And let the gentle, meek, poor, and miserable clothe themselves with the armor of faith, just as that Lamb, whose trumpet sound they are, was. Also, having the manners of simple infancy, for God always scourges those who sound His trumpet, foreseeing that their clay vessel should not perish, but be pleasing to Him. O daughter, may God make you a mirror of life. But I, who lie in the smallness of my mind, am greatly fatigued in the care of fear, sometimes sounding a little like a small trumpet sound from the living light, from which may God help me to remain in His service.

Letter 187: R187: Abbess E. von Obermünster in Regensburg to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Abbess in the upper monastery of Regensburg, to Hildegard.

To the venerable and much beloved mother in Christ, Hildegard. E., by the grace of God, if anything, namely, the abbess, though unworthy, in the upper monastery of Regensburg, sends the prayers she can, with sincere faith and affection. My soul greatly desires to see your face, most beloved lady, and for a long time my ears have been attentive to hear the words of your mouth. With great desire I once greeted your holiness in letters, but I received no replies.

Therefore, I humbly ask, prostrating myself at a distance at your feet, that through the present messenger you may deign to respond at least to two inquiries: namely, if concerning the matter for which my heart is greatly afflicted there is any danger to be feared, or if God's mercy can be presumed. I wish to know your advice concerning the care entrusted to me, how or when I might be freed from it. Again and again, I implore and urgently request your charity, if you have any bowels of mercy, that you may not disdain to relieve the greatest distress threatening my heart with your writings.

Letter 188: R188: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Abbess E. von Obermünster in Regensburg

Response of Hildegard.

O daughter of Adam, God is that rationality which has neither beginning nor end, and through which man is rational! And that same rationality is the living soul in him which will never fail. Now see and attend to the scriptures which are rooted in the root of the Holy Spirit, and which are also written about the rationality that is God. For scripture is a mirror in which we see God through faith, because our adversary watches and does not sleep. Therefore, we must fight against him with it, and we must not tempt God, but devoutly worship Him. The devil knows and sees that man is changeable and of diverse moods, and therefore does not allow the peaceful one to rest in peaceful manners. Often man in his fervor wishes to know from God what is not lawful to know, and thereby abandons the service of God, which greatly pleases the devil, because he sees him failing in both parts. Such inquiry is foolish like that sought from a false prophet! And in all these things God should not be tempted but worshipped. The devil from his most severe wickedness often throws darts into the heart of man, with which he himself confounds God. But blessed is the man who neither wants to do them nor consents to them! but lives in them as if with the suffering of death. Man therefore, naturally sins with original sin, and then repents, and abandons it for the honor of God, resisting the devil through faith. God will never lose the man who offers the greater part of his sins to Him! but will remit the lesser part to him. Therefore, sweetest daughter, provide for the care entrusted to you with such virtue, lest you abandon it due to tedium or labor. And see that you rightly consider whether your thoughts are for the good or the evil of the church of that place! For a great sin will come upon you if you do not rightly consider this. For a tree full of flowers is

beautiful to behold, but when its fruit matures to be eaten, it is much more useful. The desire for good works delights the mind of man like flowers, but the effort of the work, when the fruit begins to grow, is much better. But when man has accomplished good works, mature fruit appears, and his good works provide the food of life for him in the eternal pastures, when he has departed from this life. Therefore, good daughter of God, perfect your good desires in good works, so that when your soul departs from your body, the most beautiful reward from God may shine upon you. May the grace of God teach you these things.

Letter 189: R189: Abbess L. von Neuss to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Abbess in Nussun. to Hildegard.

To Lady Hildegard, the most beloved mother. From L., abbess, though unworthy, of the sisters in Nussun: a small offering of prayer and service with utmost devotion. Since we have learned from rumor how our state has changed from what it once was to what, alas, it vainly wished to be, we do not doubt that your blessedness has heard this news. We earnestly ask for the support of your prayer for us before God, the more eagerly and urgently because, with our minds now troubled by the burden that has been placed upon us, we are driven and distressed by various movements on all sides. For we know that God is terrible in His counsels over the sons of men! Therefore, fearing His secret, but never unjust, judgments of strictness, we entrust the cause of our soul entirely to you, in whom above all mortals we place our greatest confidence, and to your revered sisters. We eagerly await your response with all our heart. Farewell.

Letter 190: R190: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Abbess L. von Neuss

Response of Hildegard.

O servant of God, run in the circle of the sun, sighing for your sins and longing for God, and do good works before your days decline, when afterwards you will not be able to work. Also, attend to that steward who was defamed before his lord and who reduced the debts of his lord's debtors by writing them down! And you do likewise. For where you have not served your office well, help your daughters with the aid of your counsel and be merciful to them in their distress, as the suitable rain falls on the grass and causes much fruit to grow. And through penance and mercy, you will be wiser than the sons of light, that is, the fallen angels, because they refused to do this. And when you have done these works, they will receive you into eternal tabernacles after your death. For if you were to turn the plow correctly in the earth and have the suitable rain, you would be the sprouting land. For the dew from which you should have sprouted fails in you, and with the wheel which you say is your salvation, but is ashen, you wander around. Now turn your plow with the knowledge of the Holy Scripture into your heart, and through the sighs of good intention, have rain! And by happy habit, retain the dew of blessing through good works. Do these before the day of your death, so that you may live forever.

Letter 191: R191: Abbess C. von St. Ursula in Köln to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Abbess in the place of the holy virgins, to Hildegard.

To Lady and mother Hildegard, residing in the tower of Jerusalem.
From C., by name only abbess in the place of the holy virgins of the Köln church, with most devoted prayer and due service.

How much I rejoice for your blessedness, I cannot express in words. For though I am separated from you by bodily sight, I am bound to you by the deepest affection of charity. I desire to see you and to explain to you the sorrow that I bear in my heart without any human solace. But you, who are filled with all charity, I wish to have you in the place of my mother. After God, I have also placed my hope in you, and from now on I wish to be consoled and gladdened by you. Therefore, let my tears move you, let the groans of a grieving daughter move you, and remember me and pray to God, who became poor for us, that He may deign to free me from perpetual poverty, and to place me, even in the last place, in eternal blessedness. Farewell! And greet all your congregation on my behalf.

Letter 192: R192: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Abbess C. von St. Ursula in Köln

Response of Hildegard.

Bear your burden firmly on the right path, and restrain your sheep as much as you can. This is better for you than the various wanderings of the mind! For God has equal power in all places according to the works of men. With the help of God, prevent your mind from wandering, lest it be like a day that is partly in clear sunlight and partly in a storm.

Your mind is sometimes in such great bitterness that you cannot endure it, and sometimes also in weariness. Now, however, rise in the purest sunlight and in the right warmth, because God wants you, and He has appointed you as an eye to others, although you may waver in any way! Therefore, do not depart from Him.

Letter 193: R193: Abbess I. von Dietkirchen to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Abbess of Dietkirchen to Hildegard. Hildegard of Saint Rupert, teacher, illuminated by the grace of divine light! I, the abbess of Dietkirchen near Bonn, though unworthy, humbly send you these letters with the utmost devotion and perseverance in due service.

Confident in your great piety and humility, I have sent to you the bearer of these letters, written with the intention that, if it is permitted and does not offend the eyes of your piety, you might send me some words of admonition that would edify my soul and give me confidence in God, dearest mother. Even in brief writings, you promised to strengthen me when you were present at an opportune time.

Furthermore, if I do not dare to ask more, I will nevertheless use the prayers of the Canaanite woman who answered the Lord in the Gospel, saying that even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table. With the same devotion of faith, I ask you again to bestow upon me, who greatly desires it, some of the crumbs from your table, that is, from the visions in which you frequently see many marvels, in brief summation.

Remember that I recently sent you parchment for this reason. Nevertheless, as much as is in our power, we pray to God, asking that He, in His gratuitous goodness, may complete the good work He has begun in you with a persevering end.

Letter 194: R194: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Abbess I. von Dietkirchen

Response of Hildegard.

You have an unsettled mind because of muddy places and the concern of many waters that fail as they flow. For the muddy places are those who possess the fluctuation of the worst morals, and the waters that fail are those who are harsh and stony, and are not softened by the streams of the doctrine of the Holy Scripture.

But you say within yourself, "Who, or what am I, and how could I endure such things?" Now listen to the tale of a wise man. A certain man wanted to dig a hollowed place, but when he dug with wood and iron, fire flew out from a certain stone he was digging into, so that the place could not be dug out in any way. However, he measured the breadth of that place and, with great labor, made some hollows in it. And this man said within himself, "I have labored greatly, but whoever comes after me will labor less than I, because he will find these prepared for him." This man will indeed be praised before his lord, because his work in length and breadth is much more useful than work in soft earth that is overturned by the plow. Therefore, his lord counts him as a most valiant soldier who can well sustain his army and sets him as an example to other farmers who produce fruit in their own times. For whoever labors first surpasses the labor of the one who follows him. The Creator of the world began to create first and afterward gave His ministers to work according to Him.

O daughter of God, restrain your land within yourself, lest it wither without the fruitful usefulness of the children. Also, gather your heart into one, and do not fix it in the excessiveness of restless morals, lest you drive away your daughters from you. Be also like good land, which is frequently irrigated by suitable rain, so that it

may bring forth good and delightful herbs. How? When a man feeds his flesh moderately, he has cheerful and gentle manners! But when he lives in excess of food and feasts, every harmful vice sprouts in him. But he who mortifies his body through immoderate abstinence always goes about angry. In all these things, be good land, so that you may console your daughters when they weep, correct them rightly when they rise in anger, and when they are unruly, subject them to regular discipline through you. And those who turn away from you in forgetfulness, recall them with historical words and the words of the Gospel between yourself and two others, and if they do not then obey you, be obedient to the highest master! And remember Jacob, who blessed the two sons of Joseph with blessings. Now, therefore, consider the beginning of your good endeavor so that you may end with a confident conclusion, and receive eternal rewards from the highest master.

Letter 195: R195: Tenxwind von Andernach to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Tengswich, called mistress in Andernach, to Hildegard.

Hildegard, teacher of the brides of Christ! T., called mistress of the sisters of Andernach! to be united with the highest spirits in the heavenly places someday. The renowned fame of your sanctity has spread far and wide, and some marvelous and astonishing things have reached our ears! The excellence of your supreme religion and singular purpose has been commended to our lowliness.

We have learned from the testimony of many that numerous things concerning the secrets of heaven, difficult for mortals to understand and confirm, have been divinely revealed to you to be written down, and that what you do is not arranged by human deliberation but taught by God. Moreover, we have heard about a custom of yours: that on feast days, your virgins use certain white veils as ornaments, and crowns decently woven placed on their heads, with angelic images inserted on both sides and the back, and the figure of the Lamb decently impressed on the front. Furthermore, their fingers are adorned with certain rings. We believe all these things lead to the love of the heavenly bridegroom, as it is right that women compose themselves with modesty, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing.

Additionally, what seems no less wondrous to us is that you admit into your fellowship only those who are noble and free-born. We greatly admire this, though we understand that you do this for a reasonable cause, knowing that the Lord Himself, in the early church, chose fishermen, humble and poor, and that blessed Peter, after the Gentiles had been converted to the faith, said, "In truth, I perceive that God shows no partiality." Not forgetting also the words of the apostle to the Corinthians, "Not many mighty, not many noble

are called; but God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the strong."

Following to the best of our ability the instructions of all preceding fathers, by which it is most fitting for all spiritual people to be formed, we also know that your practices are entirely just and holy. So great, O venerable bride of Christ, is the novelty of your custom, that it incomparably surpasses the measure of our lowliness and causes us no small wonder. Therefore, we, so little in comparison, rejoice greatly in your progress, and yet, desiring to know something more certain about this matter from you, we have decided to send our letters to your sanctity, humbly and devotedly beseeching that by your authority, such a religion may be increased. May your dignity not disdain to write back to us soon. Farewell! And remember us in your prayers.

Letter 196: R196: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Tenxwind von Andernach

Response of Hildegard.

The living fountain says: The woman should hide within her chamber, having great modesty, because the serpent of terrible lust breathed great dangers into the first woman. How? The form of the woman dazzled and took root in the first origin, in which that was formed in which every creature is hidden. How? In two parts: in one part, the experience of the handiwork of God's fingers, and in the other, the beauty of the heavens. O, how marvelous you are, who laid the foundation in the sun and surpassed the earth.

Paul the apostle, who flew to the heights and remained silent on earth, so that he did not reveal what was hidden, considered this. The woman, who is subject to the male authority of her husband, joined to him from the first rib, should have great modesty, such that she should not give or reveal the honor of her husband's vessel to another place that does not pertain to her. And she should do this according to the word that the Lord of the earth said, "What God has joined together, let no man separate," in defiance of the devil's mockery.

Listen. The earth sweats the greenness of the grass until winter overcomes it. Winter takes away the beauty of that flower and covers its greenness so that it can no longer reveal itself as though it had not yet withered because winter has taken it away. Therefore, a woman should not raise herself up in her hair, nor adorn herself, nor elevate herself with any crown or gold unless it pleases her husband in the right measure. These do not pertain to a virgin, but she stands in the simplicity and integrity of beautiful paradise, which will never appear barren but always remains in the full bloom of the flower of the virgin.

A virgin does not have the covering of her hair's greenness by command but governs herself with supreme humility by her own will, since a man hides the beauty of his soul lest pride seize it. Virgins joined in the Holy Spirit to sanctity and the dawn of virginity should therefore come to the high priest as a burnt offering dedicated to God. Therefore, it is fitting, by the license and revelation in the mystical breath of God's finger, that a virgin wear a white garment, in clear signification of her betrothal to Christ, seeing that her mind is devoted to undivided integrity. She also considers who it is to whom she is joined, as it is written: "They have His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads." And again: "They follow the Lamb wherever He goes."

God also has the scrutiny of every person so that no lesser order ascends above a higher one, as Satan and the first man did, who wanted to fly higher than their place. And who gathers all his flock into one stable, namely, oxen, donkeys, sheep, and goats, so that they do not scatter? Therefore, discretion should be used in this, lest a diverse people gathered into one flock be scattered in the pride of arrogance and in the disgrace of diversity, and especially lest the honesty of morals be broken when they tear each other apart with hatred when a higher order falls upon a lower one and a lower one ascends above a higher.

God distinguishes His people on earth as in heaven, namely, distinguishing angels, archangels, thrones, dominions, cherubim, and seraphim. And all these are loved by God, but they do not have equal names. Pride loves princes and nobles in the persona of arrogance, but when it destroys them, it hates them. It is written, "God does not reject the mighty," because He Himself is mighty. He does not love persons but the works that have a taste in Him, as the Son of God says, "My food is to do the will of my Father." Where there is humility, there Christ always feasts. Therefore, it is necessary that those people who desire vain honor more than

humility be distinguished, since they see those things that are above them.

A sick sheep should also be cast out, lest the whole flock be contaminated. May God infuse good understanding into men so that their names are not erased. For it is good that a man does not seize a mountain which he cannot move, but remains in the valley, gradually learning what he can grasp. These words are spoken by the living light and not by man. Whoever hears, let them see and believe where they come from.

Letter 197: R197: Abbess A. von St. Glossinde in Metz to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Abbess of Saint Glossinde to Hildegard.

To her dearest sister in Christ, Lady Hildegard. From A., the unworthy abbess of Saint Glossinde in Metz, greetings in the true Savior. Because we greatly rely on your grace and goodwill, we do not wish to conceal from you that we are in great danger, as we are compelled to govern the souls of many, which we are insufficient to manage.

Therefore, we earnestly beg and beseech your sanctity in the Lord Jesus to deign to strengthen and exhort our ignorance with your letters, instructing us on what we should do. Whether we should remain in the obedience enjoined upon us or withdraw so that another may succeed and do better, if the Lord Jesus deigns to reveal anything to you regarding this matter. Farewell, and pray to God for me for the sake of God! And please write back to me quickly with your kind advice.

Letter 198: R198: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Abbess A. von St. Glossinde in Metz

Response of Hildegard.

Mount Zion is high, and its shadow extends into the valleys, showing its height. Other mountains also exist in this foreign land through which it is strengthened, and which are also beautiful to behold by the people. In the height of Zion and other mountains are designated the prelates and teachers who are the foundation of the church, and the disciples are called the daughters of Zion. But if this mountain were to fall or if others were to destroy it, it would be a great injustice.

Therefore, anyone who is in a position of authority should rightly consider how he may set himself down and how he may be cast down by others. For just as mountains provide defense against their enemies for many, so too those who stand in authority, through the teaching and obedience that is shown to them in God, are a defense for many against the snares of their enemies. Thus, as long as a teacher can utter the words of teaching, he should not cast away the rod of correction which he has received from the hand of God. For often mud is cast away by mud, as the teacher is cleansed by the disciples and the disciples by the teacher.

Because of the fear of the disciples, he will afflict himself and be punished by the tormentors of the troubled disciples, and he will imitate the highest teacher who went before him. And he will say, "I have shown them Your commandments," and so forth. And he will also say, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear." From these things learn, so that you do not flee because of the cloud of the vicissitudes of your disciples, nor even because of the weariness of your labor. For many flee more because of the weariness of their labor than because of the necessity that they cannot overcome their disciples.

A clear day that is not overshadowed by a storm has complete joy. Adam had this before the fall, but the first deceitful deceiver overshadowed that day for him by his suggestion, in which there are seven plagues that wound souls. The first plague is vain glory, which gathers to itself what it has neither earned nor sown and establishes as its own what was not given to it by God. This the first deceiver taught because he did the same! And therefore, vain glory does not seek God.

The second is that a man feels he can sin and thus stores up the delight of the flesh for himself, and by embracing this delight, he kisses it from the taste. The third ruin is built with great pains in squalid manners, so that a man lives as if he were dead to God and scarcely hopes that God knows him. But the fourth deceit is that a man excuses and defends himself from the aforementioned sins, so that they do not seem so dangerous to him as they are shown! And so he becomes hateful to men and trusts no one.

The fifth is pride, which says that because of the flesh of his humanity, a man cannot abstain from sins and therefore it would be unreasonable to withdraw from carnal desires. Pride establishes this law in its audacity, and thus has no regard for God. The sixth plague is that a man seeks his salvation from a creature and asks from it to show him everything and thus holds his Creator in derision and seeks nothing from Him as if He could not help him. The seventh plague is the service of idolatry which worships the devil and despises God.

And these seven vices have almost a military force in their affairs beyond the number of the branches of trees because all these lay hidden in the transgression of the eating that Adam committed. Therefore, God said to him, "In the hour you eat of it, you will die." For this reason, God established this commandment for him so that he would not do anything similar to the devil, namely, that he would

not be without commandment as he wanted to be. Therefore, no man can be secure in this life because of the first suggestion of the devil which Adam received.

Therefore, O daughter of God, gird yourself with the strongest armor of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, with which you may subdue these seven vices, so that you may not be wounded by them while lamenting and rise as a brave soldier by overcoming them through the strongest battles! Thus you may live forever. May God see you, O daughter, in the mirror of salvation.

Letter 199: R199: Hazecha von Krauftal to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Hazecha, abbess of Krauftal, to Hildegard.

To the most beloved lady Hildegard, illuminated by the most sacred gift of divine and true visions, from Hazecha, called by name only abbess of Krauftal, over the most fervent gift of perfect charity.

Your words, my lady, flowing from that most holy soul of yours, from the height of your contemplation as from the summit of the eternal hills, descend into the deepest valley of other souls like rain upon the grass and like drops upon the plants. They water, infuse, and make them sprout a shoot without a thorn, making them sprout living offshoots of heavenly desires up to the throne of the glory of the highest God, bursting forth with marvelous fragrance.

Therefore, I, your servant, wish to behold the letters of your sanctity and be revived by the sweet consolation of your conversation as if by the breath of a gentle breeze. For my mother and lady, all my hope, security, refuge, and protection depend on your motherhood after God. Therefore, I turn to you alone and entrust myself to your counsel and help after Christ.

Thus, I humbly and supplicantly ask again, mercifully, that you pray to God for me and kindly instruct me on what I should do regarding the many excesses of mine by which I fail both in the burden of the name imposed on me and in other transgressions, as I have requested above. For I fear and greatly dread that I may incur the offense of God. Farewell.

Letter 200: R200: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Hazecha von Krauftal

Response of Hildegard.

In a true vision! These words, which you sought from me with burning desire for the admonition of great necessity, I heard.

It is a very glorious praise when faithful teaching has these qualities, namely, those who with shields and armor and other weapons are placed as guardians of the tower to fight against those who want to destroy the tower and who fortify their city with good soldiers so that its walls are not seized by enemies and its gate is not opened to treacherous spies, and they are not killed. These people are in blessedness. But those who do not act this way are more squalid than rustics who wisely manage their villages by themselves and through their cattle, so that they do not fail in their pastures. Nothing needs to be said about these.

Who is she who ascends through the desert like a column of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, and all the powders of the merchant? Nor that: How beautiful are your steps in sandals, daughter of a prince. This means that whoever, in the exile of this world which is understood as the desert, contradicts their own will and ascends to God in their works by sighing, as it is written, "The smoke of the incense went up before the Lord," choosing the mortification of the flesh. From the smoke of incense and the mortification of the flesh, all virtues grow in him, which are never satiated.

It is said of those who do this, from the citizens of the angels and saints: How beautiful are your steps, that is, the zeal with which you walk in this mortification, daughter of a prince. But the prophet's words should reject the one who is neither cold nor hot, because he neither labors in earthly nor heavenly things, but I liken him to

locusts that neither fly properly with the birds nor walk properly with the animals on the earth, but go like a whirlwind, which quickly vanishes without usefulness.

O daughter of the holy name, open your ears and hear with a diligent heart the signs proposed by this parabolic speech, namely, how great is the glory in the highest praise of the towers of this city thus constituted. The tower of this city is charity with concord. And why is it called a tower? Because from the highest God, the springing fountain flowed around the entire earth, for God disposed all creatures in full charity so that there is no need among them.

Hence, learn that holy men in whom charity dwells do not fail in any necessity, because their hearts are surrounded by gentleness and peace like a flowing fragrance of balsam. Therefore, the ancient serpent cannot tear them apart, for just as a foul odor is separated from the scent of balsam, so the devil flees from charity and hides himself from it in a cave.

But where holy men in whom charity does not dwell are gathered in the name of the Lord, they are like a city without a tower and beautiful houses without height. In this confusion, the treasure of justice and the rule is despoiled because they do not have firm dwellings, and therefore they are often destroyed. For as the tower adorns the city, so charity adorns and sustains all virtues.

The soldiers of charity who are placed in the tower are obedience, faith, and hope. Obedience is surrounded by a shield because it is always subject, and faith is clothed with armor because it proves all good things which it has never seen with its eyes. Hope embraces heaven with all its ornaments through faith, but faith always looks to God through obedience, doing as He commands.

For God is charity, because all His work is pious, but through humility, He descended from heaven to free His captives who

abandoned charity when they did not recognize Him. He did this through humility and left us the same example. How? By leaving our own will in the offices of this world, we follow in His footsteps. But when we gather in His name into one flock, like other birds gathering to an eagle, we imitate Abraham who left his people and the land of his father's country and performed circumcision in a foreign land according to God's command.

When we obey the commands of a man who is like us, we are multiplied in blessings like the stars of the sky, as God also promised Abraham through His angel because we seek a foreign thing according to His incarnation, counting ourselves as nothing, laboring in the spiritual life. When we do this, we fortify our tower with good soldiers through humility and are good soldiers when we overcome the pleasures of this world, conquer the fury of anger, tolerate our poverty for the love of Christ, cast away murderous enmities of hatred and envy from us, and do not despise other sinners who are like us nor judge them unjustly, and do not seek false testimony against the just and innocent.

These are good soldiers who guard our city on all sides so that the wall of our holy rule and conversation is not undermined by the enemies of hateful and envious manners, and so that the gate of peace is not rejected through contradiction. For if this happens, the closure of our gate is unsealed, and our enemies walk securely into our city. Let us not be like those who always have erring hearts, saying, "We do not want what human reason puts and chooses for us because what we put and choose is more useful and just." These are the insidious ones who destroy our city through their snares because they repudiate what is established by our ancient holy doctors in fasting, vigil, prayer, and other virtues, and choose their own will over God who created them.

O daughter of sanctity, now listen. Your tower is empty without good soldiers, and the guardians of your city have fallen asleep, and most of all, they have been led into iniquity by their own will so that your tower and city are so dry they can scarcely stand. Therefore, rise from your sleep because the ropes of your ship, that is, the custom of holy conversation, are not yet broken. In great foolishness, you seek the rumors of manners that suit you, but this is not expedient for you! For just as in desert dwellings there are great and small blind mice that gnaw on people's clothes, so by this, every holy custom is torn apart.

The great mice are the restless minds of impiety, the small signify foolishness that is nocturnal and away from the path of truth, and the blind show the vanity of this world that is blind to the light of justice. Thus it is written in the Gospel: "Every kingdom divided against itself will be desolate."

Now look at how you are planted in the great ardor of the Holy Spirit and that He does not want to lack His ministry in you. First, diligently attend to the rule of blessed Benedict and other teachers with a diligent heart so that you do not perish but live eternally. But you, all masters, take care that you are not like those foolish farmers who, when they see the plow going straight by itself, rejoice, but when it goes crooked, they are weary to turn it rightly. Be careful that the master of the household does not say to you, "You are useless to me," because you do not perform your stewardship rightly! But carefully consider what is the necessity and adversity of your subjects, and with all diligence, protect them.

Letter 201: R201: Bertolf von Reutlingen to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

A certain priest.

To Hildegard, the most worthy teacher of the brides of Christ. B. by the grace of God, although unworthy, a priest and sinner of God, devoted certitude of intimate affection and all manner of service. I am weary of my life! for I am filled with bitterness. And because of the intention of which you, most holy virgin, are aware, while awaiting certain faithful friends of mine, I still delay! My way, as the prophetic words describe, is surrounded on all sides by thorns and walls. Nevertheless, I do not entirely reject the scourges that instruct Israel in every way! but because they do not bring forth fruit with the temptation, I greatly fear that I may succumb and not reach the end of the purpose! not that my heart, which frequently looks to your consolation, in which I greatly trust, is gladdened amid sins and troubles. Therefore, devoted virgin of God, we all, after God, sigh deeply for you. We seek, we ask, we knock, that you do not desist in any way from your accustomed prayers until a certain place of habitation for us, or if that seems to you a temptation against God, at least now a distinct religious order, may the merciful God deign to signify to you for us. We believe that these things have been ordained by God through you. You are experienced in this matter. For nothing happens on earth without cause. And therefore, just as you have in part freed my soul from the judgment of God's secrets from anguish, so do not flee, being a due intercessor, from liberating us all from the error of doubt through the way appointed in you by God. Besides, I greatly desire your letters about these and other matters. Furthermore, I greatly wish to transcribe your book.

Letter 202: R202: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Bertolf von Reutlingen

The response of Hildegard.

Thus says the spirit: It is most praiseworthy and wonderful that a pilgrim hastens to his homeland. Oh, how great is the grief and sorrow among the citizens and acquaintances of the one who used to feast and play with them when he departs. And oh, how greatly the wanton ones are ashamed that their companion has left behind the vessel he carried with them. Consider that you have been foreseen with great care in the eye of the living, like the gentlest father seeks his sheep. Companions who sit idly in wide spaces have mutual peace! But the bravest soldier is in great storms. Stand on the path of righteousness! And prepare your soul to fight with those who always serve in the king's legation. See, if some flying insect should leave its companions and start to fly up towards the sun, the whole swarm of those flies would rush at it, wanting to overwhelm it! But the sun would cover it with its light so that it would not be seen by either. And so it would escape. Then that whole swarm would be scandalized! And thus that soldier would become proven. May God extend his hand to you so that you may live forever! where the sun is not obscured.

Letter 203: R203: Udalrich von Augsburg to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

A certain priest to Hildegard.

Lady Hildegard, most excellent in religion, wisdom, discipline, manners, and finally in every virtue of both human natures. He is entirely yours through everything. May he labor in the sixth hour with Martha, be restored in the seventh, and rejoice in the eighth with Mary. How, my most beloved lady, could I have deprived myself for so long from the sight and conversation of your sweetness, more pleasing to me than any taste of honey, or delayed visiting you at least with little letters in the meantime? I cannot sufficiently admire myself for this, and I attribute it all to the laziness of my own insignificance. I also greatly fear that your kindness might have shown such in my ineptitude, which may it be far from so, and deservedly so. For whom, not previously known by voice, habit, face, or even fame, as soon as I arrived, which is very difficult to achieve, you most kindly received for your grace. And immediately you deigned to revive me with the participation of your conversation, which I consider great. But since I regret it, you will forgive. For my spirit was never not willing, but the ability was lacking. Therefore, I promise, if I can truly promise anything, that if God grants the ability, I will amend it as soon as possible. Meanwhile, in your prayers, for God's sake, be so kind as to remember me, a most wretched sinner.

Letter 204: R204: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Udalrich von Augsburg

The response of Hildegard.

He who is life! showed me these words, saying: You are like water that is moved in a storm and then again remains in tranquility.

Victory says to you: I would gladly come to you, but you yield to me when you hide the face of your mind, so that you are doubtful, not having wings to fly in security, where you are not in the embrace of worldly contempt. O man, resurrection will come to you quickly if you shake off the dust of ashes from yourself, saying: If I cannot stand in the sun, I nevertheless want to withdraw myself from the mud of dust and wash my garment from the fickleness of the ways of this age. Then the dove will give you ointment and cleanse your wound. Now rise and live in eternity.

Letter 205: R205: Gottfried von Alpirsbach to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

A certain monk to Hildegard.

To the most serene and truly blessed lady Hildegard, adorned with the spirit of divine vision! The lowest of the monks of Saint Benedict, although an unworthy priest, G., offers devout service of obedience with all humble submission. Those who trust in the Lord will understand the truth, and the faithful will acquiesce in love to Him, for it is a gift and peace to the elect of God. These sacred words, uttered by the mouth of heavenly wisdom, I have known and believed to be fulfilled in you by the truthful account of many. For what I find attested by the holy scriptures, I hold most faithfully, that no word is impossible with God. Therefore, the fame which I have come to know through widespread rumor, though I have not seen your holy revelations, I have not doubted to be true. I know in truth, therefore, that because you have placed your trust in the Lord, you have understood His truth, and because you have faithfully acquiesced in love to Him, you have received the gift of divine revelation and the spirit of heavenly consolation, and you have acquired the peace of God's elect.

Now, however, because the mercy of Almighty God has been found greater in you than in other mortals, therefore, not by tempting or by pride, but by simply imploring the grace of God alone through you, I humbly ask that you be mindful of that divine voice, "Do not despise one of these little ones of mine." Therefore, consider not to despise the letters of my insignificance, but through the love of Jesus Christ, I beseech you to mercifully hear my prayers and intercede with God for my sins, and by your holy prayers, to uplift my life and deign to admonish my negligences through the letters of your correction. For the correction of your sweetest charity is highly desirable to me. Therefore, I judge myself unworthy of the gift of your most loving

letter, but I desire to receive the reward of my belief from you. For I believe that through the spirit by whom you see all past, present, and future things, even the secrets of my heart are open to you. Truly, I have never seen a sweeter day for me than to come into your presence. For I would rather walk barefoot, just to hear your words, and it would be very pleasant and desirable to me, thus to merit receiving either your most excellent visions or some letters of your blessedness. May the Almighty Father, through the power of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and through the cooperation of the Holy Spirit, deign to preserve you safe and for a long time, for the correction of His holy Church.

Letter 206: R206: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Gottfried von Alpirsbach

The response of Hildegard.

The Living Light says: O man! Streams flow from me to the greenness of your mind. But your mind is bound and yet sharp, through the vicissitudes of your ways in the darkness of scattered winds. Your hidden thoughts also deceive you in your mind, and the taste of your work sometimes touches you. But the face of your desires looks to me through the joy of ascension, which you cannot yet grasp in your work. Very good are the desires that build a tower in the height of the sweetness of good fragrance, from which the angels of God rejoice because of the works of His fingers, which works taste of God by breaking the food of the wickedness of sinners.

Now you, O soldier, be strong in battle as long as you live in your body, because your enemy does not tire, and the fight does not cease. Let your works be such that the gentlest Father rejoices over you, and that His word glorifies your soul, and that the fiery lover pours the ointment of salvation upon you and the greenness of the flower of wisdom.

Letter 207: R207: Balduin von Utrecht to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Balduin, a monk, to Hildegard.

To his most beloved and most longed-for lady and mother, Hildegard, Balduin, a sinner, wishes to rejoice perpetually with Christ the Lord after this fragile and fleeting life. I consider myself blessed if I have earned the consolation of your letters of holiness. But because it is the part of a prudent physician to visit a wounded person frequently and to cut away superfluous and decayed flesh, lest worse corruption should later occur if it is not carefully and diligently excised, I ask that for the love of the compassionate Redeemer, you frequently inspect the wounds of my injuries, so that by God's mercy and your counsel, no trace of corruption remains in them.

O sweetest and most longed-for mother! I have long desired to come to you with my staff. O sweetest lady, I always gaze upon you with the eyes of my heart! I speak with you in my mind and converse with you. I know that I have sinned against my God in His work! I acknowledge my sin. Pray for me. I do not seek earthly gain, nor a transitory thing, but the grace of my God and the salvation of my soul. Help me. O how great is the continuous protection of your prayers for me. Therefore, so that I may not be entirely deprived of my desire, my lady, wishing to satisfy me, I have taken care to send this servant with these letters to you, who embraces you as his lady and mother with loving devotion. May God grant you the consolation of this present life and eternal blessedness with the saints. Amen.

Letter 208: R208: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Balduin von Utrecht

The response of Hildegard.

I heard this in a true vision. God's work in man has five operations. The first is that man was formed. The second is that he received the breath of life. The third is that he understood because he could act. The fourth is that he undertook good work! The fifth is that he knew evil. This analogy can be applied to any man in this way.

In the first instance, it is understood that man recalls his sins with sighs because they are useless. The second is that he turns away from his sins somewhat. The third is that he reveals them by confessing. The fourth is that he does penance! The fifth is that he makes himself a stranger to evil. Therefore, you, O man, in these works that God has worked in man, do penance with fear and trembling! For you have in some part contravened His work. For as long as you live and have the ability, you will offer something of praise to God in groaning and sighing in the hearing of a priest.

Letter 209: R209: Heinrich von Utrecht to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

The Master from Utrecht to Hildegard.

Greetings, noble bride of Christ, destined to receive incorruptible life. Who, what, how great, how, and from where I am—namely, H., the unworthy master from Utrecht—you can learn from the present bearer. The good fragrance of Christ, like poured ointment, spreading far and wide from you, has reached our unworthy ears, with its scent inflaming us, indicating that heavenly grace visits you frequently, illuminating you with divine splendor from above, so that sometimes the hidden dispensation of God allows you to contemplate the outcomes of any causes and the ends of matters through the grace dwelling in you, especially when you have earnestly requested such revelation.

Therefore, I, humble and dejected, afflicted by various pains and numerous adversities, undoubtedly provoked by my ineffable sins, commend myself to your holy prayers from the depths of my being! Testifying by Him who reclaimed you with His own price, that you may strive to appease His merciful goodness with your righteous labors through your tireless work. For I am utterly humbled and bent to the end, like a lost vessel, cast away from His sight, surrounded by countless evils, and my iniquities have overtaken me, surpassing my head like a heavy burden. And beyond all this, I have endured, seeking someone who might grieve with me, but there was none, and someone who might console me, but I found none.

Therefore, neither with rashness nor superfluous curiosity, but as one refined in the furnace of tribulation, with burning desire, I humbly and eagerly await to be refreshed by your longed-for replies. I yearn to understand the predetermined judgment of the most high dispenser regarding the state or outcome of my troubles, and to

receive counsel for my salvation through His inspiration from you.
But above all and in all, I ardently thirst to be assured by you
whether divinity has finally preordained me to be numbered among
the saved. Farewell, rejoice, live! And may your name be inscribed
in the Book of Life.

Letter 210: R210: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Heinrich von Utrecht

The response of Hildegard.

The mystical breath and voice of wisdom sounds: God is eternal and within Himself had this counsel that He wished to do a great work, so that all His miracles would resound through rationality. And He greatly delighted in this ancient counsel, because His work was to build many edifices of good. And so God made man. Man is the image of God into which God breathed the golden breath, which in itself has two paths in the knowledge of good and evil. One sustains heaven; the other shows evil. The one that sustains heaven is such that God perfects the power of His strength in the golden breath of man through shining works. But the other touches the breath of the darkness of the first beginning of evil, which wished to fight against God. And in these two paths, the five senses of man are counted with wisdom, knowledge, understanding, and will to great honor, just as the orders placed for the praise of God who stand in His presence are also counted.

Now, O servant of God, small windows appear in you on the better path in bright light, so that you desire good by longing for it. But on the other path, you are occupied in a black whirlwind. But you, O soldier, rise with clear soldiery and conquer this whirlwind, because the grace of God touches and admonishes you, as you can also understand in the knowledge of your secret. Turn away from evil, and do good, and God will seek you out and rest in you.

Letter 211: R211: Konrad von Reutlingen to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Konrad and Bertolf, priests, to Hildegard.

To Hildegard, familiar with God and admired above the people of this time, Konrad and Bertolf, unworthy priests from Reutlingen, as they began in the fear and love of God, persist and continuously illuminate the darkness of the world through the living light they see. We have rejoiced and been glad in the things that were said to us, namely, that a consolatory envoy would be sent to us. And we have awaited expectantly, but you have not yet directed yourself to us. Hence, we have been saddened, awaiting the grace of God, who does not abandon those who hope in Him.

Now, however, because you have commanded us to send an envoy to you, we have become as though consoled. But since we desire you, beloved of God, to remember how we in our rudimentary and delicate efforts as soldiers aspire to engage with the vicissitudes of this life with righteous hope, we earnestly beseech you, holy mother, to intercede for us in our times of need and tribulation, so that He may guide our ways as we trust in you after God. We do not say these things as if we are excessively burdened or regretful of this deed, but so that your holiness may obtain some consolation from the merciful God for us weak ones, which our sins impede, lest we falter. We dare not suggest more specifically what this should be, but rather we wish to commit the manner of our petition to the internal judge who knows what is expedient for each. For He says, "Your heavenly Father knows what you need before you ask Him," who knows the appropriate remedies for each at their proper times and does not cease to provide them.

Nevertheless, we are inclined to cry out only this: Woe, woe to earthly matters! When will they hide themselves before the living eye?

Furthermore, we greet your prior, our sisters, and all who dwell with you in the Lord, and we devoutly ask that they remember us, their poor ones.

Letter 212: R212: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Konrad von Reutlingen

The response of Hildegard.

The Living Light says: O most valiant soldiers who resist the contradiction of double-tongued words within yourselves, listen. What are those like who seek life in pilgrimage and are exiles, strangers to the part they left for God's sake? For the hands of those who labor always prepare wealth for themselves. O how great is the holiness that crushes poison in the deadly plague. Hence, in the downfall of sin, a beautiful flower grows, which is a companion of the angels. But you, O children of pilgrimage, run and pass through, and prepare many riches for yourselves! For the living eye, which always looks into the mirror of the dove, sees you. Labor and do not grow weary from the tedium of deceptive and depraved work, for the sun of light has prepared eternal life for you, and diligently run to God because His day is coming.

And let that man who is bound in many uncertainties like undulating water in many storms be so, like a tree that cannot bend like a twig! For his will sees his own care diligently. But he considers himself in this way: If there is no culpable crime burning within him, let him take care of himself. But you, my beloved ones, run to me because I see your sighs as shining and strong gold, and your mind joyful and having desires of goodwill. Therefore, enter the fight as strong retainers. For those who are in exile cannot have certain victory while remaining in the body, but they must flee the pestilence of the shipwreck of the world and strengthen the pillar of their mind with the cornerstone.

Therefore, O most valiant soldiers, do not grow weary from the vicissitudes of the instrument, for God seeks His lambs among the wolves.

Letter 213: R213: Priest B. von Trier to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

A certain priest to Hildegard.

To the sacred virgin of God, Hildegard, the venerable bride of Jesus Christ! B., by the grace of God, a priest in the Church of Trier, although unworthy of the dignity of the priesthood, himself. Although I rarely see you with my bodily eyes, nevertheless, through the wonderful power of our soul which is called imagination, the serenity of your face is daily presented to me, and I am gladdened by the joyful remembrance of you, and I am stirred to praise God! Who in our days has deigned to declare through you by manifest revelation and evident example what sacred Scripture daily recalls! That is, how the Holy Spirit has spoken wonderfully in the souls of the chaste in the ancient fathers and in the holy apostles of God, unlearned men. For it seems to me that you, with Peter, can say with the voice of David, "For I have not known letters! I will enter into the power of the Lord." Therefore, through that mercy of the divine piety, which with the most brilliant rays has illumined the innermost parts of your sacred heart in an unusual way, I earnestly beseech you to aid me, a miserable sinner, with your prayer. I also ask that, by the divine consolation upon which you frequently rely in heavenly visions, you write back to me words of comfort and kindly indicate how I might lead those whom I ought to govern under the rule of the priesthood. Farewell.

Letter 214: R214: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Priest B. von Trier

Response of Hildegard.

The Spirit of Truth in His mystical gift says: A man having wounds in himself and sprinkling them with oil, yet unable to endure the wine poured into his wounds, should frequently be anointed with mercy by the physician, and the fetid ulcer should not be allowed to remain in him, because leprosy is cleansed by the supreme physician when a man reveals himself to the priest. But many come to me with the verbosity of their minds, wanting to inquire with seeing eyes what is the health of their wounds, and they want to touch me with their sweating tongue through various words. Their inner mind does not understand me, so that they draw out the habit that engulfs them in the transgression of their ancient sins of drunkenness. But they say, "We have drunk the bitterness of correction and wiped away our iniquity." And so they do not want to leave their evil ways. Indeed, these should be bound, lest they move through secular ways, because they do not want to abandon their iniquities. However, a man who always leaves his iniquities with sorrow, so that he does not want to repeatedly immerse himself in filthy sins, should not be bound in the aforementioned way but should be anointed in his pains, wherever he may be. For the great physician awakens the vigilant and chastises the sleeping, and kills those who persist in their evils. Therefore, O physician, in these two parts, provide what is necessary according to necessity.

Letter 215: R215: Priest S. von Otterburg to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

A certain priest to Hildegard.

To Lady Hildegard, spiritual mother! Brother S. [lacuna], the least of the brothers of the church, but over all obscured by the filth of sins! To serve the spiritual feasts with Martha and to long for the joys of heavenly life with Mary. With joy, I rejoice, O spiritual mother, that you have found grace in the sight of our Lord God, and that the lamp of your blessed soul, for His coming, has thus far remained kindled with the fire of the Holy Spirit without any weariness of lukewarmness. Therefore, O sower of God, because you excel in the integrity of chastity with the wise virgins and keep the eye of contemplation continually fixed on divine brightness, the devotion of my pusillanimity prays that you may strive to appease the face of the Lord, which I have too greatly aggravated by the cautery of perversity, with your most just prayers on my behalf. For I am certain that our God, our refuge and strength, will deign to hear your prayer for me willingly and, in His mercy, with the spirit of blasphemy, by which my unfortunate soul is too greatly besieged, driven far away, and I, justified by you, may not be in perpetual fluctuation. But I also ask from your abundant kindness that, through the bearer of this letter, you may write back to my smallness with letters of your holiness. Say to your nuns, the preservers of monastic religion, as many greetings and prayers for me as there are eternal mansions in the house of the Lord. Farewell.

Letter 216: R216: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Priest S. von Otterburg

Response of Hildegard.

Your mind circles like a bird, arranging and dividing each matter it attends to. For your beginning was consecrated because the grace of God imbued you in such a way that you can comprehend virtues and many other good things. However, some are airy and have understanding of the greenness and moisture of the earth, of the air and the waters, through their senses. But God said, "Let it be done" as it pleased Him, in which all creation proceeded in its kind as it is written. "God spoke once, I have heard this twice, that power belongs to God, and to You, O Lord, belongs mercy," for You will render to each according to their works. For God created all things by His command, and this He did once when He said, "Let it be done." And in this He understood these two things: namely, that it was a great power that God gave the law to man, and that the one who rules all is merciful because through His incarnation He renders what is to be rendered, for He forgives the sins of each who sees and acknowledges them through penance. But those who neither wish to see nor acknowledge them, He rejects and sends into the proper retribution for their deeds. For God cast down the first angel who unjustly exalted himself into the pit of misery, and also sent the first man into the prison of this world because of the folly of vain glory. For He established none of His works void. The first angel had great knowledge and wisdom, but because of his great malice, he did not wish to give honor to his Lord and fell, and thus remained. But man fell through the taste of food, for which reason the Son of God offered Himself as a sacrifice for his sin. Therefore, when a man recalls that he has greatly sinned through the knowledge of good and evil, he is reborn in God through penance, sighing to God. But you, O son, learn day and night, that you may live eternally.

Letter 217: R217: Magister Udo von Paris to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Udo of Paris, master, to Hildegard.

To Lady Hildegard, most excellent virgin of Christ! V., humble and unworthy master of Paris in name and position, sends his prayer and whatever is deemed worthy of such great sanctity and nobility of person. Because you, Lady, have made yourself a servant of Christ, He has exalted you above yourself and is believed to have revealed to you, still situated in the flesh, the secrets of the virginal chamber, so that you are believed to be among those of whom it is sung, "The king has brought me into his chamber." But because a prophetic and faithful soul says and repeats, "My secret is mine," and Hezekiah, the king who opened the storerooms of spices and treasures of the temple to the messengers of Babylon, gravely offended God in this. Blessed are those who excel us sinners to such an extent that they explore heavenly matters. They should await the spirit of discretion in their ways from those who have advanced more through temptation than through revelation given by God, and even learn from men below about their visions, what to reveal and what to conceal. Thus, with God disposing their gift through humility, some things they seal, and do not reveal what would disturb the apostolic and ecclesiastical order. Attend to these things, wise woman, for the woman who fears God shall be praised. It is said that you, elevated in the heavens, see many things, and through writing reveal many things, and produce modes of new songs, though you have learned none of these things. We are not at all surprised by these matters, for they do not exceed your purity and holiness, without which such things cannot be grasped by man. However, we can know that whatever is revealed about the saints there implies glory; whatever is done by them here demands the form of humility. Although we are placed far from you, we have confidence in you and request certain

things from you, namely because many contend that paternity and divinity are not God. Explain to us what you perceive about this in the heavens and do not delay to transmit it to us. May your love thrive.

Letter 218: R218: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Magister Udo von Paris

Response of Hildegard.

I, a poor little form, in the smoke of the mountain of spices, say this: The sun descends with its light and illuminates many indignations of changing places. So you, O master, have many streams in the scriptures in your mastery, which you sometimes spread among others, that is, among the great and the small. I tremble greatly because of the humble form that is in me. Now listen. The king sat on his throne and set up great and very elegant columns in great ornaments before him, which were erected above the ivory ornaments and carried all the garments of the king in great honors and showed them everywhere. Then it pleased the king, and he lifted a small feather from the ground and commanded it to fly as the king himself wished. The feather, however, does not fly by itself but is carried by the air. Thus, I am not imbued with human teaching, nor with powerful strength, nor do I sweat in the health of the body, but I rely on the help of God. And I tell you how I have been taught in a true vision what paternity and divinity are, since I perceive from you that this is necessary for many so that they may be strengthened in true faith. I have seen and learned vigilantly and openly by seeing the true light, and not by seeking in myself what paternity and divinity are, because a man does not have this power to speak of God as he does of the humanity of man and as of the color of a work made by the hand of man. The living light, therefore, says in the secret word of wisdom: God is full and whole and without the beginning of times, therefore, He cannot be divided by speech as a man can be divided, for God is all and not another, and therefore nothing is to be subtracted or added to Him. Paternity and divinity also are He who is, as it is said, "I am who I am." And He who is has fullness. How? Of making, creating, and perfecting. Whoever says

that paternity and divinity are not God names a point without a circle, denying Him who is eternal. And whoever denies that paternity and divinity are God denies God because he wants there to be some emptiness in God, which there is not. But God is full, and what is in God is God. For God cannot be shaken nor sifted according to man, because there is nothing in God that is not God. And since the creature has a beginning, from this the rationality of man finds God through names, as it is also full of names in its own property. Now listen again, O man, to the poor little form in the spirit saying to you: God wants you to make straight paths and to be subject to Him and to be a living stone in the cornerstone, and not to be removed from the tree of life.

Letter 219: R219: Priest O. to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

A certain priest to Hildegard.

To Hildegard, beloved mother! Brother O. offers filial devotion. O beloved mother, what will the infants do, who have no one to provide them milk? The little ones ask for bread, and there is no one to break it for them. The sun has also placed a cloud before itself so that prayer cannot pass through. What will the sick man do, seeking a remedy for health and not finding the aid of consolation? The Church is wounded by schism, and the word of division, "behold here, behold there," which is to come in the head, already runs ahead in the body, and there is no health where this sword has passed through. What do you say then, honored mother? Do you think it is possible to find whom it is absolutely necessary to seek? I think the physician is absent for as long as I feel the rottenness of the wound. Therefore, approach the inaccessible, enter where access is not open to all, tell your beloved, "Why do you sleep, Lord? Seekers stand outside." Your soul is not wounded by love but struck by the sword of dissension. May the health of your prayer come to them so that they may be one. And when you have poured out your prayer before the eyes of the Lord, return to us and tell us what you have recognized within, as much as He grants, whose conversation is with the simple. I also have a soul defiled, divided by many paths and wounded! For which I earnestly ask you to pray to God, your love I most devoutly implore. For I am often attacked by evil spirits, both secretly and openly, who greatly fatigue me and seek to seduce me! And what you think of these things, I ask that you report to me in your writings. Farewell.

Letter 220: R220: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Priest O.

Response of Hildegard.

I see your soul in two parts, namely in one part to ascend, in the other to remain, but God collects your mind according to His will and not according to yours, and therefore you are greatly afflicted. For, as you say, you are fatigued by evil spirits, I see this in such adversities. For the aerial spirits are divided into four parts. The first part prepares the fire in every kind of vice and through luxury makes a man incestuous. The second part, however, flies about in all inconstancy, like the wind scattered here and there, and throws a man into insane rage. The third part causes error as if in the appearance of angels and prophecy, and in no way remains in one state, and harms men through vain glory by boasting and arrogance. But the fourth part moves with the other aforementioned parts and is in multiple diversity and is not very maleficent, nor very scourging in horror, but dwells gladly with men, and does not flee from the passion and cross of the Lord, and endures some good in men, and in these same goods removes moderation from them, so that by its suggestion it allows them to ascend higher in their minds than they can achieve, and thus it does not let them rest. For it does not fear sanctity and precipitant vanity, but has great hatred for strength and stability. And as pigs eat husks for the sake of fatness, so it often dwells with men in delight, and as if it were suffering punishment, it cries and howls when driven away by man. For when a man has seized strength and stability and moderation, it flees from him, cries and howls and says, "Where shall I be fed? And where shall I find food?" Therefore, let every man fear and be afraid, because this part of the evil spirits does not fear to dwell with both good and evil. For when a man has tedium in sanctity, he enters into great vanity and will be as a mockery to God and men. But how can this part of the

spirits be driven away and bound? When a man in his first age, as in the first hour, when he is a child, begins sanctity, let him not speak of himself, but let him listen to masters and teachers, and thus he binds the devil who cries out and howls. But in the second age, as in the third hour, when a man is young, let him keep sanctity in silence for a long time and remain silent, and in all diligence and perfection seek what is good, lest he fall into pride, and thus he kills the devil. But in the third age, as in the sixth hour, let a man not remain silent for a long time, but seek from a master in humility what should be sought, for that age is not scattered in wantonness, and thus this kind of demon appears dead. But in the fourth age, as in the ninth hour, when a man is inspired by God, let him seek counsel from masters and wise men, for then he is weak in the heat of the greenness of the flesh, and let him give thanks to God. The first age flees patience, but it is wholly holy in sanctity with patience. The second age thinks the fear of the Lord is not necessary for it, but it must have the fear of the Lord in sanctity. The third age gladly has the fear of the Lord, so let it be joyful in sanctity, for doubt easily enters there. But the fourth age stretches its sighs to God, so joys should be applied to it in all things lest it fail. The first angel in the first age, as in childhood, fell and perished through wantonness. But in the second age, as in youth, many faithful and unfaithful wanted to rise to heaven and spoke many things in words from themselves, from which they fell. And in the third age, as in manly strength, prophets came and said with great fear of the Lord, "We are not in these things, but You, God." And thus they persevered and filled all the earth with joy. But in the fourth age, as in full stability, many virtues will arise through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in men through the pursuit of good works, and thus the world will fail. But this time does not yet have the time to bear the judgment of the universe. Nevertheless, all kinds of demons make great errors in men because they fear they will be overcome. But you, O man, who are in the

youthful age, stand in stability, and listen to the words of philosophers and wise men and those speaking in the Holy Spirit, so that you may live eternally. But also say these words: "May the power that created me as a man deliver me from the aerial spirits, and may the fiery love that established me in never-ending life not allow my works to be mixed with them."

Letter 221: R221: Hermann von St. Martin in Mainz to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Hermann, dean, to Hildegard.

To Hildegard, most reverend Lady and beloved mother, Hermann, unworthy dean of the Church of Saint Martin in Mainz, a little of what is. It is not necessary for me to write how much reverence my mind holds for your holiness, how sincerely I love you, how ready I am to serve you if you deign to use my humble service, and how much I desire to be often consoled by your writings, because the splendor of divine wisdom, which illuminates you within, reveals these things to you. Indeed, I had intended to see you now and be consoled by your words, but I am hindered by bodily infirmity and cannot come at present. However, when the opportunity is given, God willing, I will see you and inquire by voice what I cannot presently seek in writing. Meanwhile, I ask you, beloved mother, to pray to our Creator and Redeemer for me, that He may so shape our lives according to His will that He may be pleased with us in Himself. I also ask that if you need anything of my service, you command whatever seems right to you. But I also wish to be consoled by your writings again through the present messenger. May God preserve you and always illuminate you with His Holy Spirit. With all my reverence, I honor you, most blessed mother.

Letter 222: R222: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Hermann von St. Martin in Mainz

Response of Hildegard.

From excessive food and immoderate drinking of wine, excessive vices grow, and the flesh of man often languishes so that he can scarcely live. Afterwards, with the weariness of sins by which his flesh is fatigued, he is burdened as if by a heavy sleep. But the devil again excites him to sin and presents him with opportunities for penance, and thus he awakens from that lethargy to sin and earnestly encourages him to sin. Many men also, through the deception of the devil, defer the penance of their sins, and thus are found in perdition. When a man sighs for his sins, he sings with the praise of angels, and when he does good works, he shines like the sun. But when he begins these ornaments, the devil falls upon him with a great storm of despair, who had previously incited him to sin with evil counsel. However, that man should consider the publicans and sinners, how much they have sinned, and how they have risen through penance, and how they afterwards became pillars of heaven, and thus should clothe himself with the armor of faith and the helmet of hope and overcome his enemies. But you, servant of God, see that in your childhood you lived delicately and in your youth with the sins of the pleasures of the flesh! Therefore, now let the weariness of sins be upon you, and begin to do good works before the shadow of this life inclines away from you, so that with joy you may respond to the voice saying to you thus: "You ought to have been the garden in which I fed my eyes, but you are not, because useless weeds and thorns and thistles have grown there, which have choked all the useful herbs. Cut these off with the sharp sickle of penance, and imitate that son who is read of in the Gospel, who, coming to himself, ran to his father, who received him with joy and kissed him with his humanity. Sow also the seed of fruitful virtue in your

garden, and liken yourself to the woman seeking the lost coin so that there may be joy in heaven over you, so that you may become a gem in the heavenly life and live eternally."

Letter 223: R223: Cleric M. to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

A certain cleric to Hildegard.

To the venerable and most beloved mistress Hildegard, the most fitting vessel of divine election. M., by the grace of God, whatever I am! Whatever the unique service is worth with continuous prayer. I hope you are well in spirit and mind. I prostrate myself with devoted prayers day and night before the feet of God for the state of all your affairs. Dearest one, if God's plan has separated us in this life, nonetheless the indissoluble bond of love has unbreakably glued us together. For I request in return that same love from you, that you keep my memory in your prayers and commend it to your holy convent. What more? To your faith, I commend my soul and body and our entire congregation. May your blessedness endure forever.

Letter 224: R224: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Cleric M.

Response of Hildegard.

Your mind is like a valley when a mountain rises within you, and again you think you are building a city when you condemn a cause with contumacy. For he who inflicts wounds that are fed by putrefaction through beatings brings forth poison mixed with blood. And this does not benefit. Such is the mind of that man who wishes to spare nothing. However, a good physician anoints the wounds. For the negligence of a man is like the wind of a whirlwind, and his fury like a great storm. Now, therefore, understand what is useful and what is harmful, since some earthly creatures resemble the works of men. For birds are for the benevolence of man, cattle for his understanding, beasts for his wisdom. But worms, which the sweat of the earth ejects, correspond to many thoughts of men. Unsuitable worms to their malice, venomous ones to their anger, but wild animals to the negligence of their works. Therefore, look to the north and see how the storm rises like smoke into the clouds. Thus, the works of man are sometimes useless. But a man who vigilantly looks around well draws thunder in benevolence and in his gentle knowledge. And he should not be a warrior in the throwing of a stone, nor negligent in the wind of the whirlwind. The sun shines. Therefore, let man anoint everything with mercy, for the builder who does not lay his foundations correctly throws down his instruments. Therefore, let man foresee what the fall will be. He who has a sigh must be tolerated. But he who despises God must be corrected if it benefits. If it does not benefit, let a suitable time be sought for that so that he does not die. But let man work for himself and illuminate his soul. A mind that does not build murder is not a murderer, but if that cause happens with work, let it always mourn and pant towards God, for that is destroyed which God has built.

Letter 225: R225: Heinrich von Maulbronn to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

A certain monk in Maulbronn to Hildegard.

To Hildegard, the beautiful olive and precious pearl, H., by name only a monk in Maulbronn with a burning lamp, going to meet the heavenly bridegroom. O how beautiful is chaste generation with clarity, for its memory is immortal, because it is known both by God and by men. From this so beautiful and blessed generation, it is clear that you, the daughter of the highest King, have emerged with shining signs of virtues, for in the face of illustrious work, you display the form of the inner man. With such a decoration of virtue, the likeness of your mother is imagined with the example of her, you have sought wool and flax, and have woven a striped garment, the covering of your soul. For the striped garment is clothed, with the virtue of charity woven in multiple figures, in which the faithful soul is clothed. In this royal garment shines humility, obedience, piety, continence, purity of the flesh, and holiness of mind; indeed, a thousand thousand similar things could be mentioned. Clothed in this variety of virtues, you sometimes stand at the right hand of the highest King, like that prophetic queen, where you found the inestimable treasure of wisdom, whence you showed the radiance of eternal light to mortals as if from the abyss. Therefore, listen, daughter, and see and incline your ear to me, so that, since charity consists in the love of neighbor, by the help of your prayer, I may feel pardon for whatever I find lacking in myself. For I undoubtedly recognize that you are more especially heard by Him in whose contemplation it often happens to you to linger. I also ask, with all respect, sister and lady, that you send me some of the heavenly admonition, so that through this I may set the memory of your holiness before the eyes of my heart. What more? Absent in body, present in spirit, I greet you, earnestly praying that you remember

me, a sinner, who always extends the step of the mind with the apostle towards what is ahead. Farewell.

Letter 226: R226: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Heinrich von Maulbronn

Hildegard.

The shadow of God's mysteries speaks. The wind blows, and the air moves in succession, and the clouds gather, so that they are sometimes troubled, black, white, and pure. Thus, you, O soldier of God, act. For in secular sorrow you are sometimes like the blowing wind and in the pleasure of the many snares of the devil, as in the vicissitude of the air, and in your restless ways like in the gathering clouds, so that your ways are sometimes squalid in turbulence, terrified in blackness, pleasant in whiteness, and useful in purity. Hence, listen.

A certain lord stood on a great mountain and called his servants, saying, "Pay your debt." One of these servants stood before him, another sat. And the one who stood responded, "Lord, I have come from a distant land of exile, where I learned various vicissitudes of ways in many crimes and sins. Oh, woe that I thus neglected your commandments. Therefore, by the fear of your love, I swear that with all my heart I want to repent. But I have always loved your sun, moon, and stars in great honor." And his lord responded to him, "Good servant! I accept your response like a revolving wheel saying, I, who live without beginning and without end, want to place you in great honors above all that you loved, nor will my ability condemn you, for you called me through repentance."

But the servant who sat responded disdainfully, "Your sun burned me, your moon touched me, your stars oppressed me, even the hairs of my head were infected by your dew, and your rains inundated me, and therefore hindered by all these things, I could not look at you, hence I also do not know what I can say." And his lord responded to him, "Most wicked servant, when I established the sun, moon, and

stars, did I need your help? And why are you not ashamed that you touch me so rashly in your responses? For this you have deserved to be bound hand and foot and cast into darkness until you repay everything."

But you, soldier of Christ, heed this parable. This lord is God who watches in that height, that God must be invoked by all. Here he speaks to men in his admonition thus, "You should be judged by your works." But some labor in divine honor, some, however, languish in the distress of weariness. And those who honor God say, "By the suggestion of the devil, we fell into exile at the fall of Adam, and in our works, we contracted many vices. We lament this transgression mournfully. For the glory of your name, we promise that we desire to abstain from our sins. Nevertheless, we have revered your honor, justice, and scriptures given through you in love." And the incomprehensible Lord praises them and establishes them over many good things, nor does he condemn them, for they invoked him in repentance.

But those who languish in the weariness of divine matters say, "Your honor afflicted us, your justice wounded us, the multitude of your scriptures suffocated us, the greenness of your spirit overthrew the pleasure of our minds, and the outpouring of your zeal fatigued us, so that we could not see you in joy, nor could we excuse ourselves." And the Lord calls them most wicked servants and says that in his judgments he did not need their help. He also asks why they do not blush that they attack him in the rashness of their words, and therefore they are to be bound and cast into penalties until they examine all their vices in themselves.

But you, O soldier of Christ, understand these things also about yourself. For the servant who stood signifies you. For when you were in the world, you did few good things. But the admonition of the Holy Spirit shook you and turned you to good. Therefore,

beware not to imitate the sitting servant, that is, do not say that you burn in the rule like in the sun, and do not despise the teaching as if in the moon, and do not be fatigued by the communion of your brothers as if in the stars, and do not bring the admonition of the Holy Spirit into the derision of your mind as if in the dew, and do not disdain correction as if in the rain, but always embrace and hold God in good will and choice, and you will live.

Letter 227: R227: Monk T. von Ebrach to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

A monk from Ebrach to Hildegard.

To his lady and mother, Hildegard, most blessed olive of Christ. T., a sinner from Ebrach, an unworthy monk of the Cistercian order, to live in the Lord and to die in the Lord. Let your belovedness know that I have sent you these few letters because I could not think of anything worthy enough for your sanctity, and with a trembling mind, I could scarcely presume to write anything to such a great person, nor did I consider myself worthy for this. Therefore, if I may dare, with your grace preserved, trembling on bended knee, I commend myself, though unworthy, to your prayers in the bowels of Jesus Christ. With the cooperating grace, as far as the measure of my indolence allows, I will most willingly remember you and your family in Christ! And though absent in body, with God as my witness, I am with you in heart and love. Now, therefore, keep me in your memory, and commend me to Christ and the Holy Mary, as I trust you will constantly do! And strive to console me with words of your consolations according to divine revelation. May the grace of the Holy Spirit be with you.

Letter 228: R228: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Monk T. von Ebrach

Response of Hildegard.

I see that God does not hide His face from you, but He constrains you with His scourges as it pleases Him. And also a great light of God's consolation will come into your soul and into the joy of your body when He wills it. God also lives in your tabernacle, nor is His grace clouded in it! Hence, you will be praiseworthy before God in your soul, even though you doubt this, for a victorious man is beloved by his Lord.

But the mystical light says: The earth, which has the richness of bringing forth growth, produces many fruits, but darnel and other useless herbs often insert themselves among them. However, sometimes a certain temperance of a certain wind ascends over this earth, whose force is such that it weakens the useless herbs but does not harm the useful fruits. Now listen. Some men, who are suitable for anything in the richness of their nature, intermingle some useless works with this fullness of knowledge through the pleasure of the flesh. But the admonition of God's grace sometimes warns them, either through the contrition of the mind or through the sorrow of bodily infirmity and similar things, to avoid evil and do good works. Understand this about yourself.

Therefore, may God pour the dew from heaven upon you, and you will live forever.

Letter 229: R229: Monk V. von Soissons to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

A certain monk to Hildegard.

To Hildegard, holy and friend of God, bride of Christ. V., the broken reed of Wiesen, the form of evil, the food of the devil. It is written: Those who do not have coverings embrace stones. But alas, during this time, stones have been taken from the way that obstructs the paths of iniquity. Mountains have fallen that fall upon mountains. The fleeing hills cover the works of Christ. The disgraceful deeds of men are laid bare before God, holding the middle course in their rush, without any mediator, they eagerly strike against the stone of offense and the rock of scandal.

From these and in these, my lady, I, in despair, daily striking against this rock, broken and crushed, still dare to hope for God's mercy. By the same mercy of God, I implore you not to reject or spurn me who leans on you, through Him who deigned to be scorned for our sake. I beseech you by the price of the blood of Jesus Christ, your beloved spouse, flowing from the cross, through whom He betrothed you and took you as His bride, to incline your pious ears to the words of the one speaking of me, and earnestly entreat your spouse to ask why He so often refuses to deliver me, crying to Him from the depths of iniquities and from the mud of filth. If I should hope for further pardon, if He wishes to grant me a contrite spirit and a broken heart, earnestly inquire with fervent prayer, and command through letters what seems necessary. Farewell. Again and again, repeating the same, I implore you by Christ not to abandon me.

Letter 230: R230: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Monk V. von Soissons

Response of Hildegard.

In the true vision of God's mysteries, I write seeing, hearing, and knowing in one way. But you, O man, are like a cloud that progresses and regresses, and which in both these parts is somewhat bright, yet through which the sun is often obscured, so that it is long awaited when it will shine. And it is written: "Behold, those who go far from you will perish." This means those who have the day of good knowledge, but look into the foreign inquiry of uselessness, and into the varieties of darkness that do not seek help in rationality but are vain, wither away, nor do they have greenness in God. For Adam, when he shone full of the innocence of holiness, perished in the transgression of God's commandments, as the diadem of innocence, that most beautiful daughter of the king, was cut off from him.

Now restore your mind to good and look into the fountain of living water, and do not seek various causes in a foreign house, because each cause that is not useful will wither away, for it is not planted by God. Let your mind be pure in God and in the hunger for God's justice and in the right path! And God will receive you. Therefore, the labors you began and do for the sake of God should suffice for you. But direct your mind and your thoughts, as much as you can, to God. I will always pour out my prayers to God for you.

Letter 231: R231: Canon H. von Utrecht to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

A canon of Utrecht to Hildegard.

To Hildegard, imitating the poverty of Christ in fragile womanhood, desiring the riches of the rich Christ, H., canon of Utrecht, greetings in the Lord who brings salvation in Jacob. I wish to experience in myself the marvel and inestimable way in which the Spirit of God speaks and writes through you. Far be it from me to have any doubt about you, because the Spirit of God speaks in you, but rather with admiration among admirers and devotion among the devout, it stirs and provokes me to the desire for a personal experience. Therefore, in humility, I supplicate your humility to reveal the divine revelations concerning my state, especially regarding the inner man, to me in the mystery of your manifestation for the teaching and caution of my spirit. This you ought indeed to do according to your promise, because when I was on my way to Rome, I obtained this from your charity. May the Spirit of the Lord remain with you. Amen.

Letter 232: R232: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Canon H. von Utrecht

Hildegard.

God was offended by the tree because of the malicious words of the serpent. Then, in the beautiful formation with which God had created man, good knowledge in him blushed because of the evil desire he had craved. And therefore, God called out to him as if on a foreign path, "Adam, where are you?" and gave him clothing, saying in Himself, "Through the tunic of my humanity, I want to seek you." And afterward, in His holy humanity, He recreated man anew so that when he falls, he may rise again through repentance in the humanity of God.

Therefore, you, man, rise quickly and wrap yourself swiftly in the tunic of God, and flee from the devil. And in the outpouring of my prayer, when my soul looks to God, I will gladly pray for you. And you will live.

Letter 233: R233: Morard von Disibodenberg to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Morard the Monk of Saint Disibod.

To Hildegard, most beloved and in Christ especially honorable mother and lady, Morard, monk and unworthy priest, [greetings] in that which is. If it is necessary to boast, indeed because it is permitted to boast in the Lord, it is fitting for me to rejoice not in myself, but in the Lord, who granted to my unworthiness such grace of familiarity with your holiness, which my humility neither could have deserved nor presumed to hope for. Therefore, first giving thanks from the depths of my heart to divine mercy, then to your graciousness, because you have treated me kindly both in my presence and deemed me worthy of your greeting in my absence! I announce to your kindness that you deign to greet all your sisters and my ladies in my stead! And also urge them that the solace of fraternity and prayers which they promised me should by no means escape their memory! For as much as the Lord grants, I have done and do in every way what I promised them, with God as my witness. For I trust in the Lord that, as long as life accompanies, I will not cease praying for all of you, that the grace of God, which has so abundantly preceded you, may continually follow you and crush Satan under your feet! So that even my smallness may be able to obtain the salvation for you, which I do not deserve, through your prayers. Regarding other matters which I discussed with you in private, when it is appropriate, you will take care to inform me in writing. Farewell always in the Lord.

Letter 234: R234: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Morard von Disibodenberg

Response of Hildegard.

Dear son, listen to this parable that I saw in a true vision.

A certain noble and beautiful lady had a chamber adorned with gold, and she often chose to have two elegant-looking girls live with her. Many crowds, seeing this lady, praised her face and wished to dwell with her. But she said to them, "I will give you gifts that please you, because it would not benefit either me or you for us to be together. For I do not wish to give my nobility and beauty to foxes and dogs and to scorn." But a certain wrinkled woman with a red and black face wanted to be like this noble lady and undeservedly took her nobility and beauty. This same wrinkled woman walks over the mountains, runs in regions and in all places, seeking praise and honor, but no one gives it to her! Instead, everyone says, "This one is restless and undisciplined, she is from the devil and should be driven away by everyone." A certain woman merchant gathered to herself all sorts of things that are pleasing to the eyes, and she strove to make them unknown and marvelous to people in sight and hearing. Afterwards, she placed a very beautiful and pure crystal before the fire of the sun, which was so kindled by the sun that it gave light to everyone! Hence, she also held all her arts in moderation.

Now, my son, attend to the first woman and her girls, but flee with all your effort from the wrinkled woman! However, gather the woman merchant to yourself. For the first woman is charity with her girls, namely benevolence and generosity! But the wrinkled woman with the red and black face is worldly love, by which men of wanton conduct bind themselves to each other with vile desire. The woman merchant is philosophy, which institutes every art, and which finds

the crystal, that is, faith, with which one comes to God. I trust in God that you will have a part with these, because you have offered the gifts of the passion and resurrection of the Lord to God in the fiery crystal.

Letter 235: R235: Priest C. to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

A certain priest to Hildegard.

To Hildegard, the chaste dove who dwells in the clefts of the rock. C., the least of Christ's servants, a priest, sends heartfelt prayers of devotion and all that pertains to eternal salvation. Because by the grace of God, your light shines healthily before men, I glorify your father who placed you as a burning lamp for the illumination of the Church. And although I am frail and sinful, I nevertheless heartily rejoice in your holiness, by which you cling with a unique privilege to the embraces of the heavenly Bridegroom. I also want you to know that I long to see you face to face day and night, and constantly remembering you in my prayers, I sometimes mentally embrace you as if you were present, though you are absent in body. Therefore, I humbly beseech your perfection to commend me to your Bridegroom, under whose shadow you rest securely, as I beg by the roadside, lest the passing crowd silences my cry! But through your prayers, may I be led to the Lord, merit to be illuminated, and be healed from the blindness of my heart.

Concerning the body and blood of Christ, in which the entire hope of the faithful rests, also teach me. And how you perceive in spirit both the uncorrected and corrected priest approaching the same sacrament, kindly make known to me in the Lord. May the Lord, who is in all things and above all things, pour upon you those things that pertain to the glory of His holy Church. Farewell.

Letter 236: R236: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Priest C.

Hildegard on the Body and Blood of Christ.

In a true vision with wakeful eyes, I saw and heard these words about the sacrament of the Lord's body. God remained what He was and assumed what He was not. That is, His divinity, which existed before time, remained in eternity, like a wheel not divided. But the incarnation of the Son, which had not yet appeared as flesh and blood, lay hidden, predestined in the heart of the Father. At the time appointed, the Son took on flesh and girded Himself with the strength of His power, as it is written: "The Lord has put on strength and girded Himself." And the garments of the holy incarnation were announced by the angel to the simplicity of the Virgin, in whom he found the foundation of humility, as God had ordained it, because she called herself the handmaid of the Lord. The same angel said to her: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you." For the Holy Spirit visited her, surpassing all human understanding, infusing Himself into her in a way unlike any other woman who would ever give birth. And the power of the Most High overshadowed her, so that in His warmth He so softened her that He wholly wiped away every fervor of sin in His sweetest overshadowing, like a man seeks shade from the heat of the sun.

Thus, the same power of the Most High, which worked the flesh in the womb of the Virgin, transforms the offering of bread and wine on the altar into the sacrament of the body and blood at the words of the priest, nurturing it with His power. Hence, the nativity, passion, burial, resurrection, and ascension of the Son of the supreme Father are manifest in the same sacrament, as a coin shows its lord. And this happens so that the wounds of men, who are always sinning and enwrapped in the transgression of Adam, may be healed, cleansed,

and anointed in the wounds and blood of Christ, thus becoming His members. And this will continue until the last day.

And again I saw that if even a priest lacks the dignity of holiness due to the many impurities of his sins, yet is not bound by the censure of a higher authority, the power of the Most High still works His miracles in the same offering. And all who faithfully receive the same sacrament from his hand are enlightened as by a ray of the sun. However, if he is just in faith and works, his soul is illuminated above the radiant brightness of the sun. But all who, following the counsel of the ancient serpent, create illusions and schisms in this most holy offering, are like the fallen angels who denied God to be one in His honor, because they wanted to be like Him. Likewise, these men wish to carry out their own will through these sacraments, and therefore perish with them unless they run to God through the confession of their sins, penance, and with a lamentable voice saying: "Alas, alas, we have sinned." Then God the Father receives them, as He received those who ignorantly wounded His Son.

This sacrament and the resurrection of life, the Sadducees, who err in all things, stubbornly deny, like a man would err who said flesh could be without spirit and spirit without flesh, which can in no way be. Therefore, they are worse than all who err, because even the smallest creature made by God cannot be defined by a single word. How then could man, who encompasses all creation, be defined by a single word? Winter withers, but summer flourishes, yet winter retains its vitality until it brings forth its fullness. Thus are the body and soul. The body fails, but the soul remains in unfailing life, wherever it may be.

Letter 237: R237: Priest N. von Königslutter to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

A certain priest to Hildegard.

To his lady Hildegard, radiating with the splendor of divine light, N., an unworthy priest and master in the house of hospitality at Lutherrun, to be satisfied with the elect when the glory of the Lord shall appear. Recalling often the grace and kindness that many have experienced in you, we give thanks to Almighty God that He has deigned to confer a manly spirit and not a few virtues for adornment on a woman of such fragile sex, deprived of bodily strength from infancy. May the Lord increase His grace in you and in all those who are with you, and may He cause you to be mindful in the spirit of kindness before God of us and of the many who have placed their hope in you.

We therefore earnestly desire to hear from you the salutary teachings of your holiness and to understand diligently from you the state of our life. Whatever God reveals to you about this, deign to write back to us, knowing that we have resolved to obey your counsel and advice to the best of our ability. For it has been enjoined upon us to serve the poor, which we cannot accomplish without the burden of a tumultuous spirit. Therefore, we desire to know from you whether it is more beneficial for us to withdraw to our cloister or to persevere in this tumult. May God reveal to you what is more pleasing to Him in this matter.

Letter 238: R238: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Priest N. von Königsutter

Response of Hildegard.

In a true vision with wakeful eyes, I heard these words in my spirit. O son, who are in the form of God, hear this proposition that the Son of God spoke to those who said among themselves what they had chosen for themselves. A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho. This same thing the Son of God spoke about the first man. When he heard through the serpent's rumor, which he heard through the woman, that he could sin, he chose for himself what he had heard through the rumor. For the mind is like a man, and choice is like a woman. But when a man chooses some cause for himself and attracts it to himself through choice, he loves it greatly, just as Adam loved the choice he heard through the woman because the woman was joined to him like choice to the mind. When Adam did this, he descended from the vision of peace and became like the moon, which wanes; but though he was a wanderer, he still knew his Creator, and in that knowledge, he was like the moon that sometimes increases.

And he fell among robbers, which was the property of his will that deceived him, just as a robber deceives men through the wiles of deceit until he captures them. They also stripped him, that is, the same property took away all the glory he had in paradise, just as robbers strip men of their substance. Therefore, every man who will be happy should flee from what his own will has chosen for him because it is as harmful to him as it was to Adam when he listened to his wife. It also inflicts great wounds on him, and if he wishes to be healed, he must seek the physician with great sighing, because even the transgression of Adam sent him into the exile of this pilgrimage, so that he scarcely lived in the knowledge of good and evil. Neither the sacrifice of Abel, which Noah perfected by the building of the

altar, nor the ministry of Abraham's obedience, which Moses fulfilled by the law, could lift him. But the Samaritan lifted him. This Samaritan is the Son of God, who was wholly incarnate in the sanctuary of the Holy Spirit, that is, in the integrity of the Virgin's womb, without any of Adam's blindness, which human nature possesses. And He lifted Adam with his members from the pit of hell.

In his wounds, He poured oil and wine. The oil, namely, when in His incarnation He showed Himself to him, moved with mercy. The wine, however, when He enjoined him to do penance for his sins, as it is written: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." And placing him on His beast, He led him to an inn. His body is like a beast because He carried man on His shoulders on the wood of the cross, as He also showed because when He made man, He created the beasts with him, just as He saw His incarnation when He formed man. And when He joined that incarnation to Himself as He wished, man, along with all creation, saw and recognized God and man. He gave the whole world to man as a tabernacle, like an inn, and led him into it when He freed him through His passion and healed him with mercy and penance. And on the next day, He took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. On the next day, after His resurrection, He left man to His vicars, namely the apostles and others who followed their example, enjoining them to do as He had done and gave them the two testaments.

Namely, what the new law had made, and what He Himself had also worked. For just as God, when He made man, created beasts with him, so men first sacrificed to God in the old law in creatures, namely, in birds and cattle. But afterward, they invisibly immolated the victim of Christ's incarnation in the Holy Spirit, for we know His incarnation but cannot see His divinity, but embrace it by faith. Just as we know this world but see eternal life in faith. We see our bodies, but in no way see our souls, except that we know without a

doubt that we do not live without the soul. Thus all works are, some obscure, some manifest. And so too we will have the Creator of all in His humanity and divinity. In this way, in the two testaments, God left man to His vicars to act with him as He had shown them, namely, anointing his wounds with mercy and cleansing them with penance. And this will be until the last day. Then, too, when He returns, He will give the dwelling of eternal inheritance to all who have done what He showed them in good will.

Now, O steward of God, do likewise! And be careful that your mind is not darkened without the sun, moon, and stars, that is, do not choose this and that according to your own will as it pleases you, saying that this and that is good. For your mind will then be a dark cloud. But look to that true Samaritan, and as He did, so do you in the ministry to which you have been appointed by your master. For it pleases God that mercy be extended to the needy and that sinners be led to penance. Do this as much as you can, helping him who gives the same alms for his sins, so that you may live forever.

Letter 239: R239: Wibert von Gembloux to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Vvibertus monk.

To Hildegard, of excellence and merit, and with reverence to be named, servant of Christ, Hildegard. Brother Vvibertus, the last of the brothers of Gembloux, with the virgins to receive the crown of glory from the bridegroom of virgins in eternal blessedness.

Uncommon and almost unheard of in all ages are the gifts of the Holy Spirit granted to you, O venerable mother, Hildegard. We, to whomsoever your writings come, considering the author of the gift from the gifts, give thanks. For even if we do not merit to receive them immediately due to our sins standing in the way, we may still draw from you, to whom they were infused as into a pure vessel, as you frequently overflow and distill these gifts.

Indeed, your breasts are better to us than wine, fragrant with the best ointments, while from the cellars of contemplations into which the eternal king often introduces you as his bride, you return to the external with the holy visions you see face to face between the embraces of your bridegroom, making us participants through your writings, leading us eagerly in the scent of your ointments. For who, reading these visions or the expositions of the visions, does not delight in them as in all riches, and tasting how sweet is your sound and Catholic doctrine, immediately exclaims about you, "Your lips distill honeycomb, honey and milk are under your tongue, your emissions are a paradise of pomegranates with the fruits of apples."

Truly, O holy mother, according to the promise of the Lord, "Rivers of living water flow from your belly," as you have become a fountain of gardens, a well of living waters flowing with force from Lebanon, for from Lebanon they flow to us, not from you, but through you, from Lebanon, from the mountain clothed with all

virtues, from the mountain which the Father has not only lifted above the hills but also above the tops of the highest mountains, from the mountain thick and rich, which, among other mountains, ceases not to water us abundantly with the overflowing of its blessings, from which help comes to us from above.

Indeed, after that one by whose birth we fully achieve salvation, your grace is unique among women. For if some songs or prophecies of Mary, sister of Aaron and Moses, or Deborah, or Judith are found in the scriptures, you, much more abundantly irrigated by the spirit in the mysteries of the visions or revelations of the Lord, appear to us equal to the highest contemplatives, if I may speak moderately.

And O the wondrous and constantly praiseworthy kindness of the compassionate Redeemer towards the human race, who through the sex by which death entered, in the mother of the same, life is restored, and from the hand that brought the poisonous drink of perdition, from that same hand in you, salutary doctrines as antidotes of recovery are poured out to us.

However, to remind you not presumptuously but reverently of caution and perseverance in sanctity, for you do not need progress since you have already ascended to the height of perfection, remember, mother, that you still carry your treasure in a fragile vessel and recall that not reeds or rushes which are easily bent but very great and old trees are sometimes uprooted by the winds. Look at David, consider Peter, and do not think highly of yourself but fear, and the greater you are, humble yourself in all things, not as one who does not have, but as one who has grace to be preserved intact to the end.

Know that on a path full of snares and full of scandals dangers are never absent, and walk cautiously until you reach the end. Never be secure until the reckoning that must be made concerning the talents entrusted to you before the creator is finished. Do not boast of the

received as if of your own, except as it is written, "Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord." And although the worst power or strength of Leviathan in the loins or navel of the belly is now not to be feared by you, for you have trampled underfoot the head of the malign one, the principal suggestion of lust, yet remember from the Apocalypse that the dragon's tail not only sweeps the soil of the earth but also drags a third part of the stars of heaven with it. It is also written there about some horses that they have power to harm not only in their mouths but also in their tails, for their tails are like serpents and in them they harm.

Therefore, holy mother, since you have already escaped the head of the ancient serpent, guard against being struck by the tail, and as much as you can, with God's protection, guard the heel, that is, the end of life, from its cunning. And though I speak thus, do not accuse me of presumption, for I intend not to teach out of rashness but to admonish out of devotion towards you, and because I have lingered on this occasion to converse with you.

These things indeed for your part. But for mine, who am stuck in the mire of the deep and whose scars have rotted and corrupted from the face of my foolishness, I pray by the sweetness of the omnipotent God that you may deign to count me among your familiars, and do not refuse always to remember me, lifting pure hands in prayer, I beseech the immense kindness of the compassionate Redeemer, that for my past evils he may grant me pardon, for the present amendment, and for the future caution without delay.

Since I am a cloistered monk and no opportunity or ability to come to you is afforded to me, so that I may confer face to face on what I would like to know from you, I pray that you may attentively deign to consider what I suggest to you through the bearer of the present letter, and requesting the manifestation of the Spirit for utility, do not hesitate to inform me what should be done in these matters. I also

ask that you do not mind answering my written questions. For we, I and many others with me, wish to know if it is true what fame spreads about you among us, though it is not easy for me to believe, namely, that after your visions have been written down by notaries at your command and direction, they slip from your memory so that you do not at all recall what you have said.

We also wish to know whether you dictate these visions in Latin, or if another translates them into Latin as you pronounce them in German. We also desire to know whether you learned the elements of letters from childhood, and whether you have studied the holy scriptures through reading or learned them solely by the anointing of the teacher, who teaches whom he wills about all things.

Since, therefore, my lady, I cannot physically behold your face, which I believe shines with divine light, at least make me hear your voice through letters, for your voice is sweet to me, so that I may have something memorable of you, in which, as in a mirror, a reflected image of your holiness may shine for me and inscribe itself in my heart with both more ardent and frequent memory.

May the Lord deign to preserve the presence of your holiness for a longer time for the honor and benefit of his church, reverend mother. Amen. Our lord abbot and prior, along with the entire Gembloux church entrusted to them, greet you, praying to God for your safety and asking you to do the same for them in return. I greet you more cordially, I who wrote this letter to you, and many others with me, all seeking the assistance of your prayers. Farewell in Christ, my lady, always most dear to me.

Letter 240: R240: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Wibert von Gembloux

Hildegard on the manner of her vision.

These words I speak neither from myself nor from another human, but as I received them in the heavenly vision, I relate them. O servant of God, through the mirror of faith in which you strive to know God, and O son of God, through the formation of man in whom God has established and marked his miracles, for just as a mirror in which things are seen is placed upon its base, so the rational soul is instilled into the body as into a clay vessel, so that the body may be governed by it, and so that the soul may contemplate heavenly things through faith.

Hear what the unending light says: Man is both heavenly and earthly. By the good knowledge of the rational soul, he is heavenly, and by the bad, he is fragile and dark. And the more he recognizes himself in good, the more he loves God. For if he sees his face soiled and covered with dust in the mirror, he strives to clean and wipe it. Similarly, if he realizes he has sinned and is entangled in the variety of vanities, he laments, for he knows he is polluted in good knowledge and cries with the Psalmist, "O daughter of Babylon, miserable." That is, human desire is confused by the foam of the serpent. It is also poor and needy because it lacks honorable opinion in contemplative knowledge, meaning that it does not desire the glory of eternal life, which it tastes through good knowledge, by seeking it from God. But blessed is he who holds to what lives from God, and whose knowledge teaches him that God created and redeemed him, and who, for the sake of this liberation by which God freed him, crushes all bad habits of his sins and casts all the misery and poverty he has in celestial riches onto that rock which is the foundation of blessedness.

For when a man knows he has filthy corruption and cannot abstain from the taste of sins, the blackest birds dirty him entirely! But then he trusts in God through the rational soul, which he neither sees nor knows. And although man knows he is thus and lives in infinite life, he cannot refrain from sinning frequently! And therefore, oh, how marvelous and lamentable it is that God sometimes makes such clay vessels adorned with his miracles, even though they cannot abandon their sins except as much as is prohibited by the grace of God. For Peter was not secure, who ardently promised he would never deny the Son of God, nor many other saints who fell into sins but afterward became more useful and perfect than if they had not fallen.

O faithful servant, I, a poor female form, say these words to you again in true vision. If it pleased God to lift my body as well as my soul in this vision, fear would not depart from my mind and heart, for I know I am human, although I have been enclosed since my childhood. Many wise people have been so infused with miracles that they revealed many secrets, but they attributed them to themselves for vain glory and therefore fell. But those who drew wisdom from God in the ascent of the soul and considered themselves as nothing became pillars of heaven, as happened with Paul, who surpassed the other disciples in preaching and yet considered himself as nothing. John the Evangelist was also full of meek humility, and therefore he drew much from the divine. And how could this be if I, a poor little one, did not recognize myself? God works wherever he wants for the glory of his name and not of earthly man.

Indeed, I always have trembling fear, for I know no security of any ability in myself, but I extend my hands to God, so that like a feather, which lacks all heaviness of strength and flies by the wind, I may be sustained by him. Nor can I know perfectly what I see while I am in bodily office and invisible in the soul, for in these two there

is deficiency in man. From my infancy, before my bones, nerves, and veins were strengthened, I have always seen this vision in my soul up to the present time, being now more than seventy years old. And my soul, as God wills, ascends in this vision to the height of the firmament and to the alternation of the diverse air and expands among various peoples, although they are in distant regions and places remote from me. And since I see these things in my soul in this way, I also see them according to the alternation of clouds and other creatures.

However, I do not see these with external eyes, nor hear them with external ears, nor perceive them with the thoughts of my heart or with any comparison of my five senses, but only in my soul with my external eyes open, so that I have never suffered any defect of ecstasy in them, but I see them vigilantly day and night. And I am constantly constrained by infirmities and often so entangled in severe pains that they threaten to bring me death! But God has raised me up until now.

Therefore, the light I see is not local but much, much brighter than the cloud that carries the sun. I cannot measure its height, length, or breadth. It is named for me the shadow of the living light, and as the sun, moon, and stars appear in the waters, so do scriptures, words, virtues, and certain works of men formed shine in it for me.

Whatever I see or learn in this vision, I retain the memory of it for a long time, so that sometimes I recall what I have seen and heard and at the same time see, hear, know, and almost instantly learn what I know. But what I do not see, I do not know, for I am untaught, but I am instructed only to read letters in simplicity. And the things I write, I see and hear in the vision, and I use no other words than those I hear and express them in unpolished Latin words as I hear them in the vision. For as philosophers write, I am not taught to write in this vision, and the words in this vision are not like words

spoken by human mouth, but like a flashing flame and as a cloud moved in the clear sky.

The form of this light, too, I cannot recognize in any way, just as I cannot perfectly gaze upon the sphere of the sun. In this same light, I occasionally and not frequently see another light named for me the living light. When and how I see it, I cannot express. And while I see it, all sadness and all anguish are taken from me, so that then I have the disposition of a simple girl and not of an old woman. But due to the continuous infirmity I suffer, I sometimes find it tedious to express the words and visions shown to me there. However, when my soul, tasting them, sees them, I am transformed into other dispositions so that, as I said before, I forget all pain and tribulation, and what I then see and hear in the same vision, my soul draws as from a fountain, yet it remains full and inexhausted.

My soul, however, is never without the aforementioned light named the shadow of the living light, and I see it as if I were gazing at the firmament in a clear cloud without stars, and in it, I see the things I frequently speak about and what I answer to those who inquire from the brightness of the said living light. In two ways, namely of body and soul, I do not know myself and consider myself as almost nothing, and I turn to the living God, and I leave all these things to him so that he, who has neither end nor beginning, may preserve me from evil in all these things.

Therefore, you who seek these words, along with all those who faithfully wish to hear them, pray for me that I may remain in the service of God. And you, O son of God, who seek him in faith and ask him to save you, look at the eagle flying to the cloud with two wings, which, if injured in one, rests on the ground and cannot lift itself up, even though it eagerly wishes to fly. Thus also a man, with the two wings of rationality, namely with the knowledge of good and evil, flies so that the right wing is the knowledge of good, and the

left is the knowledge of evil, and evil ministers to the good, and the good is sharpened and guided by the evil, and through it, he becomes wise in all things.

O dear son of God, may God elevate the wings of your knowledge to the right paths so that if you taste sin, for you are born such that you cannot be without sin, you do not commit it by doing, and then you will fly well. For the heavenly harmony sings to God about a man doing thus, praising him because the dusty man loves God so much that he completely despises himself for God's sake. In this way, O worthy soldier, be in this struggle so that you may be in the heavenly harmony, and may it be said to you by God, "You are of the sons of Israel because you look to the high mountain through the lattice and through the pursuit of heavenly desire."

And all those marked in your letters sent to me may be so governed by the Holy Spirit that they are written in the book of life.

Letter 241: R241: Wibert von Gembloux to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Again, Vvibertus the monk. To the most holy mother Hildegard, Vvibertus.

The joy I had believed was granted to me by divine favor through my vision and conversation with you, which was supposed to occur when our abbot and I journeyed to visit you during Lent, has been temporarily taken from me, I think by the envy of the devil. For when we had progressed as far as Cologne, our journey was impeded by Satan, and the wicked suggestions of the carnal relatives of our abbot disturbed his intention of continuing on to see you, so we stopped progressing further.

But I hope that what has been taken from me to my sorrow will be restored to me by divine grace at a more opportune time when all obstacles have been removed. In the meantime, I am very eager to know what has been done regarding the questions that the brothers of Villers sent through me to be solved by you, which I, being recalled from the journey, entrusted to my dear Baldwin to deliver to you. Have they reached you or not? If they have reached you, all of us, your friends in the spirit, beseech you, prostrate at your feet, that you boldly enter the sea of their solutions and entrust your sails to the breeze of the Holy Spirit, relying on such a guide to bring you without difficulty to the calm harbor.

Therefore, I also pray that along with the aforementioned letters from the brothers of Villers and our own solutions to them, you may prescribe yours, so that one may enhance the other and make everything clearer and more pleasing.

Letter 242: R242: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Wibert von Gembloux

Response from Hildegard.

Charity, which instructs faith with the abstinence of sins and builds chastity with patience, is like a pillar that supports the four parts of a house. For charity had planted a very glorious garden with the most precious spices and the noblest flowers, roses and lilies, which exuded a very sweet fragrance. In this garden, the true Solomon used to delight his eyes. This garden represents the holy virtues, which God, who is true charity, worked in the rod of Jesse, namely Mary, who flourished in chastity and brought forth the most noble flower. From this flower, the voice of the turtledove was heard, calling forth the virginal nature signified by the lily, which on its stem emits white flowers with the fragrance of the most delightful odor, just as virginity is honored in the world for its sweetest odor of good intention.

Hermits or monks, who for Christ have renounced the world, should live without the company of secular pomp, just as a virgin after her vow lives without the memory of a man. For virgins and monks are the same among the angelic orders, since just as angels desire nothing other than to behold the face of God, so too, they, having cast aside all secular pomps, follow the Lamb of God, Christ, carrying his cross, and generate shining flowers of the Lord's passion because of their true contempt for the world.

Now, O son of God, placed in the valley of true humility, walk in good peace without pride, which is likened to a steep mountain offering a difficult and almost impossible ascent or descent to those who rely on it, and on whose summit no building can be constructed. For the man who attempts to ascend higher than he can achieve holds the name of sanctity without security because he glorifies

himself only in name without the building of good works and with a certain foolish joy of mind.

Therefore, look at the most glorious garden which charity planted, and gather each virtue to yourself in true humility and simplicity of heart. And although you are among the varied minds of men, learn how long-suffering and patiently divine goodness tolerates all of us. Also, flee the inconstancy of the lazy servant who serves one master today and another tomorrow, and gird yourself manfully with the sword of the word of God, following the example of the strongest soldiers who guard the bed of the true Solomon.

Commend the sincerity of your mind with vigilant eyes to Almighty God so that you do not begin to sleep in doubt again and again, and be a worthy and beloved soldier of the true Solomon, whom he loves and crowns for the victory of daily struggle. May the Holy Spirit ignite you with the fire of his love so that you persevere indefatigably in the love of his service, that you may one day merit to become a living stone of the heavenly Jerusalem.

Question: How should we understand what is read, "He who lives forever created all things at once," when it is said that God distributed his works over six days?

Solution: The Almighty God, who is life without beginning and without end, and who eternally possessed all things in his knowledge, created the matter of all heavenly and earthly things simultaneously, namely heaven as bright matter and earth as turbulent matter. This bright matter flashed from the clarity which is eternity, like a dense light, and it shone over the turbulent matter, so that it was joined to it. These two matters were created simultaneously and appeared as one circle. In the first "Let it be," angels proceeded from the said bright matter with their habitation, for God, being both God and man, created the angels before the face of the Father, and formed man, who was to be clothed with a tunic,

in his image and likeness. Thus, at the command of the Almighty God, when he said "Let it be," every creature appeared from the turbulent matter according to its kind and nature. The six days are six works, for the beginning and completion of each work is called a day. After the creation of the first matter, there was no delay, but immediately, almost in the blink of an eye, the Spirit of the Lord moved over the waters. Nor was there any delay afterward, but God immediately said, "Let there be light."

Question: What does it mean that it is written, "God divided the waters which were above the firmament from those which were above the firmament"? Should we believe that material waters are above the firmament?

Solution: God divided the waters that were above the firmament from those that were below the firmament so that just as the lower waters serve earthly constitutions, the upper waters also serve higher constitutions. In the upper waters, nothing grows or diminishes, as in these lower waters in which whatever lives grows and diminishes as man does. But the upper waters remain in their original state as God constituted them, and they flow in their circle and are material, but not like the lower waters, for they are much subtler and entirely invisible to our sight, whose humidity and the heat of the fire there above solidify the firmament as the body subsists through the soul lest it dissolve. The lower waters, however, those beneath the firmament, are grosser and are a mirror of the celestial luminaries, namely the sun, moon, and stars, which contain innumerable animals of diverse kinds that are born and subsist in them. Therefore, the offices of the upper and lower waters are entirely dissimilar.

Question: Before the first man sinned, did he see God with bodily eyes, or will we see him with bodily eyes when we have received spiritual bodies according to the apostle in the resurrection?

Solution: In the resurrection, when man has received a spiritual body and the same body is inseparably united to the soul, he will behold the splendid face of the holy divinity with the angels without end. For Adam, who was formed by God so wise and perfect that he was filled with knowledge and wisdom above all men, never saw God in his divinity as he is, but he saw a certain brightness proceeding from his face with his external eyes, in which he truly recognized him to be the true God. For before sin, while his soul still ruled his body, he beheld that brightness with his eyes, which were then spiritual through innocence, which he could no longer do afterward, for he immediately lost this vision in paradise after sin, when his eyes were opened through the transgression of God's commandment to the carnal desire which he had previously recognized.

Question: What kind of speech did God use, and in what form did he appear to the first man when he gave him the commandment and when he walked in paradise after the sin?

Solution: Almighty God spoke to Adam with angelic words, which he well understood and comprehended. For by the wisdom he had received from God and also by the spirit of prophecy, he then had in his knowledge all the languages that were later invented by men, and he knew the nature of all creatures fully. The Lord also appeared to him with inestimable clarity, in which there was no form of any creature. And again, after the sin, walking in paradise, he appeared in the flame of fire.

Question: What does it mean that the Lord said, "Behold, Adam has become like one of us, knowing good and evil"?

Solution: This means that Adam, through the knowledge of good and evil, had something in common with us, but he abandoned the good in the knowledge of good and chose the evil in the knowledge of evil with the taste of the forbidden tree. And again, Adam was

alienated from us because he despised the good he had previously known through the serpent's counsel and completed the previously unknown evil by agreeing to it through the taste of pleasure. And again, it was said, "See, lest he take from the tree of life and live forever." God said this because, in his great mercy, he was moved over his work, namely man, who had sinned, lest he live miserably forever in such a changed state from glory. And he thus mercifully drew him to himself like a father his son who wants to depart from him. For he greatly loved the man whom he had foreseen as the clothing of his Word, hence he also created all creatures for his service and assigned him to the place from which that luminous one fell into death like a corpse.

Question: What kind of eyes were opened to the first parents when they saw before sin, as it is said, "The woman saw the tree," etc.?

Solution: The first parents, before original sin, had spiritual eyes, with the soul ruling the body through innocence. But after sin, being deprived of the spiritual vision of the same eyes and having become mortal by the condition of sin, their carnal eyes were opened, so that through the knowledge of evil, seeing and knowing the works of sins, they did according to the desires of the flesh with the devil persuading. Thus they forgot all the glory they previously had so that they scarcely remembered anything of it, like a man who sees something from afar and can scarcely consider what it is, and like a shadow that passes by seen in a mirror.

Question: What does the Lord say to Noah and his sons, "I will demand the blood of your souls from the hand of every beast and from the hand of man," and shortly after, "Whoever sheds human blood, his blood will be shed"?

Solution: God will demand the blood of Noah and his sons and of all mankind, which is the seat of the soul, from the hand, that is, from the mutable nature of all beasts in the resurrection after the last

day, for he does not want the soul to be clothed with another body or blood except the one it has warmed and which was its seat. For in his powerful foreknowledge, where he foresaw man to be formed from the dust of the earth with the breath of life, which is the soul, with flesh and blood as he afterward formed him, he will demand him to be resurrected in the same foreknowledge. He will also demand the blood of souls from the hand of man, that is, from the man who, by oppressing his neighbor, causes his soul to depart, by the mortification of his flesh and blood in penance, always crying out to God, his creator, with a sorrowful voice, because he forced the soul of the one he created to exit through the wounds of death.

Whoever sheds human blood, considering this almost in vain without the effort of sweating, upon him the judgment of God will be brought, either by the sword, or by poverty, or by the loss of his riches, and if not upon him who has become guilty of bloodshed, it will be brought upon his children and grandchildren.

Question: What kind of bodies did the angels have who appeared to Abraham, to whom he offered fine flour, a calf, butter, and milk, and they ate?

Solution: The three angels who appeared to Abraham sitting at the door of his tent appeared in human form because they cannot be seen by man in any other way. The mutable man cannot see the immutable spirit, and this is because of the disobedience of Adam, who, being deprived of spiritual eyes in paradise, transmitted his blindness to all mankind. Every creature that man is has a shadow, which signifies that man is to be renewed into an unending life. And just as the shadow of a man shows his image, so too the angels, who are naturally invisible to men, appear to those to whom they are sent in human form through bodies taken from the air, adapting themselves somewhat to their customs, not using angelic speech but such words as they can understand, and they eat as men, but their food vanishes like dew that falls on the grass and is dissolved by the

heat of the sun in a moment. Evil spirits, however, use the form of any nature to deceive men, considering the nature of that creature which is matched to the vice by which they can overcome the man they attack, just as the tempter seduced Eve through the serpent.

Question: Why did Abraham and Jacob command, one to his servant and the other to his son, to place their hands under their thighs when they were about to swear?

Solution: Abraham, who left his homeland and kin at the command of the Lord, through the wound of his flesh, which was the sign of faith, advanced as a glorious standard-bearer to fight against vices. For by the grace of the Holy Spirit, he bore the banner of holiness above others and obtained the privilege of supreme sanctity through the faith of his works, whereby in the oath under his thigh, he prefigured the holy humanity of Christ, who, according to the ancient counsel of the Almighty God, would descend from his seed and through his humanity, destroy the counsel of the ancient serpent by liberating man.

Question: Why did the holy patriarchs so fervently desire to be buried in the double cave that Abraham bought from the sons of Heth?

Solution: The double cave that Abraham bought for his burial symbolizes the Old and New Laws. Just as the soul was hidden within the body, so the New Law was hidden within the Old. In these two, death, which entered the world through a woman, was buried. The holy patriarchs desired to be buried in the same cave because, touched by the spirit of prophecy, they recognized the sacrament of the New Law in the Old, just as the sacrament of the Son of God in the redemption of man was hidden in the rod of Aaron that blossomed. They knew the Creator in the creature, and Christ suffering was signified in the sacrifice of lambs and rams.

Question: Was the fire that appeared to Moses in the bush and did not consume it real? Was it the same fire that shone on Mount Sinai, or that descended on the disciples in the form of tongues on the day of Pentecost, or that appeared over the head of blessed Martin while celebrating the sacraments?

Solution: The fire that Moses saw in the burning but not consuming bush should be believed to be the Holy Spirit. The sparks that sprang forth represent the diverse gifts of virtues. This varied appearance of fire did not descend from the lightning of the higher elements but from the fire that is life, and it does not consume what adheres to it, but confirms it by giving life.

Question: What is meant in the book of Kings about the ark when it is said that in the ark there is nothing but the tablets of the covenant, and in the letter to the Hebrews, it is read that beyond the veil there was another tabernacle called the Holy of Holies, having the golden censer and the ark of the covenant overlaid on all sides with gold, in which was a golden jar holding the manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the tablets of the covenant?

Solution: The one who said that there was nothing else in the ark revered by the Israelite people but the tablets of the covenant neither knew nor sought to know anything more in it. But Paul, who through the deep knowledge of his spirit, revealed more by divine grace than others, taught more fully what secret was kept in the ark.

Question: Is it to be believed that Samuel truly rose at the invocation of the witch?

Solution: Saul, who was rejected and abandoned by God because of his sins, wanted to know the outcome of the upcoming battle through the witch. Therefore, he commanded that Samuel be called to him from the dead to tell him what he sought. But this could in no way be done, for it would be impossible for a holy and just man to

lie after death, since no soul, faithful or unfaithful, once separated from the body, can lie. The souls of Samuel and Saul could not inhabit the same place because Samuel was a faithful friend of God, while Saul was a rebellious transgressor of his commandments. The devil can deceive a man not through the soul of any person but through a fantasy and the form of some creature. Saul lost his kingdom along with his life because he had departed from God, just as Adam was stripped of the glory of paradise because of his transgression and became a son of death. Therefore, he could not obtain what he sought from God.

Question: What does Paul mean when he says, "If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels"? What are the tongues of angels?

Solution: Angels, who are spirits, do not speak words of rationality unless for the sake of man, for their tongues are sounding praises. Man, who knows all that sounds through their sounds, shows the joy of his heart in the sound of the voice that he raises with the breath of the soul.

Question: What is the length, breadth, height, and depth that the Ephesians comprehend with all the saints?

Solution: By this length is understood the divine essence, which is without end and beginning, for it cannot be comprehended by any ascent of knowledge from its work, which has a beginning. The breadth signifies the infinite power of God, which had no beginning and does not increase by growth nor decrease by diminution. The height is the clarity of the holy divinity, which never began to shine, and whose brightness will never pass away. The depth designates that God, in these three preceding powers, fights against the abyss of the north, which are in his power and which can in no way resist him. In his brightness, all the saints who loved him and persevered in the good of their service with faith and works are comprehended.

Question: What does the apostle mean when he says, "In him we live and move and have our being"?

Solution: In him, with the elements, we move, using them in such a way that we seek from them all that pertains to our use. In him also, illuminated and enlivened by the breath of life, we live, through which we recognize him as our God and creator. In him, we also have our being because we will never have an end of life in the soul, whatever its merits, through which we, with all our sensuality, with the elements and in the elements, like the wind, fly and move.

Question: What does Paul mean when he says, "I was in the deep of the sea for a night and a day"?

Solution: Paul, considering his labors, spoke these words in sorrow, showing that by God's permission, he was in hardships and labors as if he were in the dangers of storms and waves of the sea, which never ceases to flood. God also wanted him to be wearied by the darkness of the devil's deception and to be tempered by great unrest of infirmities, all of which he faithfully and patiently endured, being strengthened by him.

Question: Why does Paul call himself the least of the apostles when he labored more than all of them?

Solution: Paul calls himself the least because he was not with Christ, who appeared in human form without sin, like the other disciples. And because through the Son of God, in a spiritual vision, with his soul neither fully in the body nor fully out of the body, he was compelled to believe, which he never desired to learn or know.

Question: What does Paul mean when he says, "Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits fornication sins against his own body"?

Solution: Every sin that a man, with his sensuality, performs through his flying knowledge by the devil's persuasion against

another man, is done by the devil's art, which sows discord among men, inciting them to anger and hatred. Therefore, it is outside the body. But he who, in the heat of his flesh with incestuous desire, moves in his veins and marrow through fornication, incites and wounds himself until he is exhausted, sins against his own body.

Question: From the day of the resurrection to the day of the ascension, when the Lord was not among the disciples, where is he to be believed to have been?

Solution: God, who through his humanity visibly remaining with us filled the whole earth with his miracles, after his resurrection, during those forty days, with the same humanity that he had assumed from the Virgin Mary through the Holy Spirit, purified all the elements that had contracted impurity through the transgression of the first man. The souls of the saints and the saved, whom he redeemed from hell with the victorious banner of his power, accompanied by a multitude of angels, remained with him in the air where he sanctified all things.

Question: What does it mean that it is written about the Lord, "And the angels came and ministered to him"? In what did they minister or what service did they render to him?

Solution: When the devil recognized that he was so separated from Christ that he could touch him with no suggestion, he left him and fled from him as a man flees from his enemy, whom he fears will kill him. And immediately, the angels sounded praises in the miracles of the holy divinity because the humanity that had been conquered in paradise in the first human beings victoriously overcame all the temptations of the devil in Christ the man, and thus, they ministered to him in praises, knowing that he was both God and man.

Question: Since new souls are newly created from nothing by the providence of the Creator and are given bodies in the wombs of mothers, how do they contract the stain of original sin, and by what justice are they punished?

Solution: Just as a potter's vessel that has been filled with poison infects everything placed in it with the danger of impurity, so all human flesh, contaminated and infected through the flesh of the first man, exists unless it is cleansed through the pure flesh of the Son of God, which he took from the Virgin Mary in baptism and penance. For the soul, from the form that God shapes in the womb of the mother, to which he sends the breath of life, contracts the stain of sin through the counsel of the serpent by which the first man was deceived. This stain, for which it is punished, is washed away by the ancient counsel of the holy divinity in the Son of God through faith and baptism. However, he who without faith and without baptism fulfills all carnal desires with great zeal and does not repent of this will remain in perdition with those who are not redeemed through Christ.

Question: When the Lord says in the Gospel about himself, "I proceeded from God and came" and about the Holy Spirit, "The Spirit who proceeds from the Father," what is the difference between the procession of the Son and the procession of the Holy Spirit, so that the Son is called the Son, which cannot and should not be said of the Holy Spirit? What is the distinction between the generation of the Son and the procession of the Holy Spirit, since both are from the Father?

Solution: My Father is power, and I, the sounding Word, proceeded from him when he created all creatures through me. The Holy Spirit also proceeded from him, my Father, when I descended into the womb of the Virgin, whose flesh was not wounded by the serpent's deception, and I took on humanity conceived from the Holy Spirit.

The fiery Holy Spirit, who is the fiery life, the true ascension, and the equal life in eternity, and through whom all forms that were formed by the Son of God are invisibly moved, proceeded from the Father into the Virgin, who is a creature. He kindled her womb with his fire so that she, impregnated by him, gave birth to the Word of God through whom all creatures were made, without a carnal father. Just as the form of man is seen and his soul cannot be seen by carnal eyes, yet he is one man in two natures, so the Son of God, conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin and made man, was seen in his humanity by all flesh but was invisible in his divinity. He exists as one God in the two natures of his humanity and divinity.

Question: What does Paul mean when he says that he was caught up to paradise and to the third heaven, and whether he was in the body or out of the body he does not know? Did his soul leave his body when it was taken to these places, or did it remain in the body, giving life to it, and reach these places?

Solution: Paul, in an ecstasy, flew through his rational soul to where Christ called him, like a man who sleeps and travels through many dreams. Meanwhile, his soul warmed the blood in his flesh to prevent it from coagulating and drying out due to cold, just as the sun stands in its height and shines and burns from afar by its power. He penetrated the firmament, observing the miracles as God established it. He was caught up to the third heaven, to the clarity that flashes from the holy divinity and where the blessed souls rest, and there he received such strength from God that he could no longer doubt. But he did not reach the place where the holy divinity burns, where the angels, who are like the brightness of the sun, and where other angels, who appear like the splendor of fire, behold the immutable divinity without beginning and end, as an eagle cannot bear the superior fire. He also entered paradise in the splendor of the angels who minister to men, where he fully recognized all the secrets he saw through the soul and sensed them in the body,

knowing in his knowledge that they were unbearable for man, who is dust. Therefore, he is wiser than all prophets, whose prophecy, which they saw in shadows, was like the honey of bees multiplied for many uses. He felt everything that the soul saw through the body, leaving it in doubt whether he saw it in the body or out of the body. Therefore, all his words are profound, sharp, and penetrating. As soon as the soul returned to his body and settled, God greatly tamed him, for he had fierce ways, lest he learn things in his own manner that did not pertain to the height of the Holy Spirit.

Question: What do the grace of God and free will have in common, and what is their distinction?

Solution: Free will is in the soul, which exists as a breath from God and is created by God to form his creation. Through it, a person feels that they have God, whether faithful or unfaithful, in any profession or opinion. In their knowledge, they choose evil, turning toward it as Adam did, who knew God's command and turned to evil through the serpent's counsel. The grace of God and free will have this in common: a person, in the knowledge of good and evil, can choose to do either good or evil. Through the property of free will, what is chosen according to the taste and desire of the flesh, which one is never compelled to relinquish, is accomplished with the help of the devil. What is chosen according to the will of the soul is accomplished with the help of the grace of the Holy Spirit.

Question: How should it be understood when it is said, "You have ordered all things in measure, number, and weight"?

Solution: God has so constituted all the tabernacles of our bodies in the right measure that none of them exceeds those who dwell in them by weight or breadth, just as the sun, moon, fire, air, water, and earth are established in the firmament with equal weight, number, and measure. Man, who is every creature, also exists in the right measure because all his members are so filled by the soul that as

long as the soul is in him, he can neither wither nor diminish. But pride, which flies above all that God has established and which despises God and does not wish to know or adore him, and which falls from all his creatures, is death and has no right measure because it disperses all that God has rightly arranged and constituted in his providence and wisdom.

Question: What is the nature of that harmony of the elements about which it is said, "In themselves, the elements change their qualities as in an organ, and each keeps its sound"? Does this relate to what the Lord says about the harmony of heaven that makes one sleep?

Solution: From the rushing path of the upper ether through which the firmament revolves, the sound of the elements is joyful and glorious, just as the symphonic voice of the human spirit is sweet in its life. For each element has the sound established by God, and all together they sound like the strings of a lyre and harp. The harmony of heaven does not pertain to the harmony of the elements, which will change with man, just as the sun placed in the firmament shines on this world and not on the highest heaven.

Question: How should it be understood that "A fountain went up from the earth, watering the whole surface of the ground"?

Solution: By God's command, a fountain ascended in the land of delight, which watered it with all its fruits without any diversity of change as it was first constituted by the Creator. It waters because it does not have the vicissitudes of summer and winter and other seasons that are in our land and are similar to the unstable habits of men. Just as the moon is covered by the splendor of the sun, so in the splendor of the brightness of this unchangeable land, the sun, moon, and stars are obscured. There is nothing mortal in it, and it receives nothing mortal. If anything mortal were to come into it, it would be suffocated by its powers as if by water. But the land where the heat of the sun is so great that it dries the drops of rain like a

great and strong fire dries the drops of water poured into it is watered by the water that flows from the fountain that ascended in paradise, signifying the stable ascension of holy virtues ignited by the fire of the Holy Spirit.

Question: Since Enoch and Elijah are believed to have been bodily translated to an earthly paradise, should they be thought to need bodily food and clothing in such a place of happiness?

Solution: In his providence, God had ordained for Enoch and Elijah that they should be in that place where they would neither need food nor drink nor clothing. Thus, anyone who is taken up in the miracles of God, as long as they dwell there, does not use these things that are necessary for mortals.

Question: What does it mean that Jonathan's eyes were enlightened when he ate the honey?

Solution: Jonathan was like a rich and fruitful land, easily turned by the plow and often producing useful herbs even when untilled, because he was gentle in his manners and affirmed true and just judgments without anger and hatred. Whoever has such manners, their humors are healthy and excellent in the brain, veins, and marrow through all the foods by which they are refreshed, for in them, anger and sadness do not arise through melancholy with the change of various moods because God's gift is present to them, making them germinate and flourish like dew. But whoever is infirm through melancholy is like hard land, which is scarcely turned by the plow, because in their manners, they have anger, sadness, and opposition to all justice unless they constantly resist it by the nature of the soul. Nor can they have joy in their works. But whoever has the aforementioned manners is kind in all their works, and through food, their flesh and blood grow and they are strengthened, just as Jonathan's eyes, previously dimmed by bodily weakness, received

sharp sight when he was strengthened by tasting the honey, which had greater power through the air above it than other honey.

Question: Since evil thoughts frequently arise from the human heart, how can it be known which arise from the corruption of our depravity and which are moved by the instigation of evil angels?

Solution: Thoughts that are so deeply embedded in the hearts of men from original sin that they move them to delight in their flesh, blood, and veins are human. But airy thoughts by which men wish and desire to have in their hearts and know what is impossible because it cannot be done are vain, for they fly around uselessly like air. Concerning these thoughts, it is written, "The Lord knows the thoughts of men, that they are vain." Man, who flies through rationality and knows things by seeing and touching, always investigates those hidden things that pertain to the soul and cannot be comprehended by bodily sensitivity. But evil thoughts sent by the devil's art to man come forth from his heart and mouth and are food for the devil, for he devours souls through them as man swallows food into his stomach when he makes them contradict God and his commandments through unbelief and thus strips them of their garments. Yet many persist with God through holy works and pure faith, overcoming him strongly by the grace of God.

Question: Are corporal things seen with spiritual eyes? And conversely, are some spiritual things known with corporal eyes?

Solution: Spiritual eyes are the knowledge of the rational soul, which cannot see bodily things as they are, just as a blind person cannot see with external eyes but only understands and knows through hearing what is seen. Bodily eyes do not have the capacity to see spiritual things perfectly, but as the form of a man is seen in a mirror in which it is not, so man sees and knows spiritual things through the hearing of words in faith. No spirit can appear to man as it is in its nature because it is a living breath from God, which

vivifies and strengthens its garment, the body, and does not cease to work with it. When it departs from it, it will be either in the light of blessedness or in the darkness of punishment.

Question: Is the fire of hell corporeal or incorporeal? If it is corporeal, as many faithful believe, is it to be thought to be made of the matter of the four elements?

Solution: By no means. For neither is it from these elements, nor is this fire from that. That fire is invisible. Corporeal and spiritual punishments are not equal, just as the body is dissimilar to the soul, and the soul is not equal to the body because, from corporeal punishments, the body withers and dies, while in the spiritual fire of hell, spirits and souls are tormented but do not die in it. The purgatorial fire in which souls to be saved live and are punished is not kindled from the fire of hell but rises by God's judgment according to the sins of men, from which many have been greatly astonished in ecstasy.

Question: Do the saints in heaven and the wicked in hell know what happens on earth?

Solution: The saints in the heavenly homeland know all that happens on earth because everything done on earth appears before God either in his judgment or in the sounding praises of the angels. The wicked, who never ceased from their sins nor amended them by penance, know the evil deeds through the mockery with which they deride their followers and understand the good deeds through the wailing over the blessed who do not follow them.

Question: The parables often referred to in the Gospels, such as the one about the man who fell among robbers, the king who made a marriage feast for his son, the ten virgins, and others, did they actually happen as real events, or are they presented solely as similitudes to show something else?

Solution: Christ proposed his parables to men because of the spiritual vices by which they are often deceived and also because of the virtues by which they victoriously fight against them, so that they might know through them that he would judge them for the evil and reward them for the good.

Question: Since according to the soul, Abraham and Lazarus are in comfort and the rich man is in hell, what should be understood by Abraham's bosom, Lazarus's finger, and the rich man's tongue?

Solution: Abraham's bosom signifies the obedience he exhibited to God through the sacrifice of his son and circumcision, for obedience preserves and sustains all good, just as a bosom holds all gathered things. Lazarus's finger symbolizes the ministry of obedience, which is the essence of God's commandments, because it teaches all good, just as a man points out what he wants with his finger. The rich man's tongue signifies his own will, which produces the feasts of carnal desires, for as the taste of the tongue discerns all foods, so the will of man is known through it.

Question: What special merit is signified by the fact that, as found in the books of Gregory of Tours, Saint Martin was so often shown in the form of fire?

Solution: Almighty God, who is love and strength, had filled the soul of blessed Martin with the fiery outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and therefore, because of the merits of humility, piety, and mercy, with which he always beheld the living God in a contrite heart, he often appeared in fire.

Question: In what kind of body did blessed Nicholas appear to the sailors watching and sleeping, as well as to both Constantine and the prefect, since he did not do so in his own body? Likewise, Peter, Paul, and other saints, whose bodies are buried in the earth, become

visible to those who are sleeping or watching. In what or what kind of body do they come?

Solution: If this spiritual vision did not appear to men, they would not understand what it was, nor would they believe it, because they are in two natures, body and spirit. The form of man, namely a human, whose one part is mutable and the other immutable, could never see the immutable spirit unless it appeared in an immutable form, for a mutable form is vivified only by the spirit, just as a horn sounds by the sound and not by itself. In the good intention that God signified in these holy men, the good intention of those men responded, just as men behold the signs of the firmament.

Letter 243: R243: Monastery von St. Michael in Siegburg to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Brothers in Siegburg. To Hildegard.

Hildegard most beloved lady and mother! The unanimous brothers from Saint Michael in Siegburg. whatever servants owe to their lady or sons to their mother. With a special affection of charity, we have chosen you as our spiritual mother and have received you into the fellowship of your prayers the knower of all secrets knows, and from the frequent messages we have sent to you your affection has also been able to perceive. But you, on the contrary, have never shown the affection of a mother in us. The letters of admonition which, even if unwilling, as a mother you ought to have directed to your sons, not even to those who were desiring them, you have ever offered. Nevertheless as we have begun to knock at the door of your heart let us not cease, so that if you do not rise because you are our mother you may rise at least because of our importunity and grant to us those things which are necessary for us. For we ask that you reveal to us something about the state of our place instructed in true vision! and that you transmit to us words of admonition and correction. These, dearest mother are the matters whose investigation we especially desire from you, humbly asking that both these and other things which you know to be more necessary for us you transcribe. And just as we receive you so may you also receive us into the fellowship of your prayers. Farewell.

Letter 244: R244: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Monastery von St. Michael in Siegburg

To the congregation of Siegburg. To Hildegard.

In a vision of the spirit which I frequently see, I saw and understood these things. For I see this congregation as a cloud which appears like that light when the day departs and the night approaches.

Among you, I also see some shining like stars in good intention, but some are languishing in the darkness of weariness. Therefore, rise and grasp discipline lest the Lord be angry and you perish from the just way. I also saw a crown having two circles, one below and the other above, full of angels all around. And in the middle of this crown, Michael the archangel stood like a tower, such that these two circles adhered to him like two walls. On his chest, the form of the Son of Man was shining, around which it was written: The Lord will send forth the rod of your power from Zion! Rule in the midst of your enemies. He also extended his right arm, holding a shield in his right hand. And next to him, a cloud appeared like golden smoke rising from a censer, in which the merits of the prayers and holy works of this people shone. And I heard him say to this people: As long as I see the splendor of holiness in you, I will fight for you against the black arrows which I have seen burning from the impious tyrants towards the dwellings of your place. Then I knew that this rod of power was the rod of Aaron, which flourished with branches of virtues, which God had placed on the first day in the angel who by himself had fallen from happiness. But God saw the rod of inheritance in Mount Zion, which flourished like the virtue of greatness in man, where the omnipotent God rose in virginity. And this flower came forth from Zion, whence also many waters flow, giving the sweetest wind which are the flourishing works of holiness in the minds of men, so that they recognize God in all things.

Therefore, in the face of God shines when they cut off the

suggestion of the devil from themselves, fighting against him as if in the midst of their power with two wings, so that they love God more than themselves and do the most holy works. And then they stand like a pillar of cloud in the midst of their enemies, striking them from both sides, loving God and doing the most holy works, which shine like the sun in the splendors of the saints. But the first angel wanted more to overcome God and stand in His honors, rather than to love Him or do good works. Therefore, man honors divinity when he conquers himself, where in his ability he could do evil, when virginity remains in the banner of the King in him, and when others in the taste of sin return from the mill of iniquity, leaving the world, which is all in the splendors of the saints, whom the Word of God thus brought forth in the will of the Father. And therefore, to this crowd it is manifestly said in the Holy Spirit: The blessing of the Lord be upon you! in the splendors of the saints. And all who bless you, may they be filled with blessings, and those who curse you, may the blessing flee from them.

Letter 245: R245: Monastery von Hirsau to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

From the monastery in Hirsau. To Hildegard.

Lady Hildegard, divinely chosen for the edification of the church! The poor and humble flock of monks in Hirsau thus desires to be adorned by divine piety, that they may know the humble of Christ to be consoled in tribulation. Blessed be the glory of the Lord who from His exalted throne looked down with marvelous and unusual order, when He wished so much light of His grace to shine upon the world through you. Therefore, all the children of the church rejoice, but especially we who are spiritually suffused with a new light of exultation! while in the sorrow we endure for the deficiency of our order, we hope to be gladdened by divine consolation through you. What, then, are the things that cause us the greatest anxiety? What most gnaws at our minds? Consider a few of these. With God as witness, we do not slander our abbot in any way! Yet we lament that he is forgetful of paternal leniency towards us in many things, and more indulgent towards some of his familiars, also using his free power more moderately in all things. Indeed, we perceive our reputation to be torn apart by the greatest calumnies and infamies regarding these matters! and especially for the lamentable discord that arose among us long ago, and nonetheless the recent conflict between our abbot and the prior. We lament that our religion is held in the greatest contempt by seculars. Therefore, uncertain of what to do, we humbly implore that through your prayers the divine will may somehow shine upon us regarding these matters. If by letters of consolation we may deserve to be informed by you what is most appropriate and pleasing to God in these matters, we will always strive to repay the favor to your dearness with the only thing we can and know to be most pleasing to you: the remuneration of your prayers for this benefit.

Letter 246: R246: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Monastery von Hirsau

To the congregation of Hirsau. From Hildegard.

The serene light says, O lamenting flock adorned with the sign of the bond of obedience, be stable in your thoughts, and let your desires yearn for the love of God. Therefore, consider where prosperity or adversity may lie. Hear the measure of the valleys. Valleys sometimes green and flourish from the dew of heaven and the warmth of the sun, and sometimes they dry up and wither in the change of seasons. Yet these valleys, which sometimes lose their beauty due to the diversity of the weather, I do not entirely forget, as if they will never again rise in their beauty. So also, I will not forget this place where you stand, for wisdom will not lack the matter of holiness in it, as it initially proceeded in righteousness. But you, be a shining flock in victory, trampling down the vices that shake you in these turbulent times! and do not be ashamed that you accuse yourself of your evil deeds, for God anoints and wipes away all wounds in repentance. Yet the living eye has noted the past cause in that sorrow, that you were disturbed by the defiance of your superiors because the sweetness of the anointing of the mother's mercy was taken away from some of your sheep, lying in guilt, who were not rightly judged in the penalty they had in their repentance. Incongruous rain makes the land arid. So too, a man who has sinned, if he does not have someone to anoint him, immediately flees into despair and dries up because no remedy is given to him according to what he can bear. Now, dear sons, hear the voice of the living light. Grasp the mercy that did not originate from you but comes from God, and therefore do not withhold it from those to whom it is to be extended. Lead them back, therefore, to the health of their souls.

Letter 247: R247: Monastery von Eberbach to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

From the monastery in Eberbach. To Hildegard.

Hildegard, whom the Lord has chosen as His servant and made privy to many of His secrets! The poor flock of brothers in Eberbach, in the company of the wise virgins with true lamps and burning torches, joyfully enter into the nuptials with the bridegroom of faithful souls and heavenly citizens. The Spirit of the Lord, whom He has chosen and predestined for Himself, never abandoned them but nourished their thoughts in paternal gentleness. Thus He has chosen you, a blessed and happy soul, as His instrument and vessel of His choice. Beloved in the Lord, we must obey your maternal admonition, because the truth of the Lord speaks through you. We gladly receive your admonitions and humbly request that you do not hide from us what needs to be corrected in us, but as it pleases the Lord, who reveals many secrets to you, strive to impart it to us. May the Angel of counsel and strength, who is always around you, preserve and keep you safe and sound.

Letter 248: R248: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Monastery von Eberbach

To the congregation in Eberbach. Hildegard.

The mysteries of God command me to speak these things in the shadow of a vision. You have ascended to a very high mountain, and you wished to look into the valley. Meanwhile, a strong storm has come upon you. Ah, the languor that is in your loins! as the proven servant David says, "All day long I went about in sadness, for my loins are filled with illusions, and there is no health in my flesh." And thus your eyes languish from poverty. Beware, therefore, that you do not cast away that happiness which seems to be in you by the predestination of God, through the excessiveness of the wars of recklessness! For when God made the face of the first angel exceedingly elegant and like a flashing stone, he entered into recklessness, and thus his glory perished within him, for he desired no good things. And God planted his brightness in another vineyard. And because God has no fellowship with evil, take care that the special grace of God is not removed from you through the work of the ancient serpent! For he rejoices in himself and says, "I find my will in discord among the spiritual people and walk with them in their arrogance." Therefore, resist the devil lest the light of clarity fail in you, as it was taken from him through his pride. For those who sometimes stumble and then rise again will not be deprived of the inheritance of God's grace, but in the whirlwind of God's vengeance they are bowed down, and yet afterward God rebuilds in them the root of the first inception of the sacrifice of the virtue of God. And I say to you who are the planting of God, over your place the mysteries of God say this: "I will never blot you out as long as you do not resist me in impious recklessness that does not desire to be cleansed, as the recklessness of the diabolic art, as has been

foretold, shows." In the blessing of Abraham, the living light blesses you.

Letter 249: R249: Bertolf von Zwiefalten to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Bertolf, Prior in Zwiefalten, to Hildegard.

To his most beloved lady of Saint Rupert, Hildegard, the most revered cohabitant of the Holy Spirit! Bertolf, Prior of Zwiefalten, with his other brothers whose names are known to God, offers the exhibition of due prayer. If you are well and prospering according to your wishes, this we entirely wish for. Furthermore, because the abyss of despair has surrounded us in restoring the religion of our monastery, and the sea of its irrationality has covered our heads, we humbly and supplicatingly prostrate ourselves before you, seeking the solace of your counsel with all devotion. For we hope that through our prayers, you may obtain from the Lord the ability to reveal something to us for the future by the revelation of the Holy Spirit, as we are often burdened by the importunity of some of our brothers. We ask all this of your holiness, that you may not disdain to reply to us with the kindness of your pen. Farewell, and pray earnestly to the Lord for us sinners.

Letter 250: R250: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Monastery von Zwiefalten

To the brothers in Zwiefalten. Hildegard.

The serene clarity speaks. The most powerful light of divinity knows and understands all things perfectly. Who can touch this intellect, or who can comprehend it except the one who sees in the sapphire eye that God the Father is immovable in His justice, that He does not overlook any iniquity, because iniquity does not touch Him? And God the Father is so delighted in Himself that He created all creatures through His Word. Hence, His creature pleased Him, and He embraced that creature which touches Him by loving Him. Oh, great delight of this work! God the Father is immovable in His righteousness, but He spares the wicked through His Son, being admonished to spare. For He looks upon His Word made flesh and remembers that through His Word all creatures were made. In this way, the saints of God also touch Him in admonition, in their clear voice like a bright cloud, flying like the airy vapor of water.

Therefore, listen, you who burst forth in your crimes. You are called the mountain of the Lord because you ought to imitate the Son of God in your conduct. Why then do you neglect the maternal bowels of charity and righteousness, being like those who in Horeb chastised their bodies according to the law but then went astray in another way, like those watchmen who sound loudly in their guard but still let the city fall into snares? Your mind is like a cloud that brings storms, now having anger in negligence, now the filth of livestock in petulance, where you neglect the peaceful sacrifice, saying, "We do not want to resist ourselves because we cannot gird our bodies with restraint, for we are born of Adam." For in the palace of the king you do not wish to restrain your liver as you ought. Why then do you not blush, that you, as if taken from the stable of donkeys and placed in the great honor of the ceremonies of

sanctification by the supreme Lord, again return to the stable of donkeys? Oh, woe! You have become like Balaam, who raged in the wounds of burning scars, raging in the region of the shadow of death. Do not leave the mountain of sanctification for the vanity of pleasure. Oh, woe to the disgrace that is cast back into a foreign place. For they perish who transgress in the holy institution. Take up discipline and do not stray from the path of justice as if you had no law and as if the sun does not shine upon the censer of blessing, lest the Lord become angry and you perish from the just way when you lie in transgression. Oh, fearful and venerable sacrifices that do not have the unbelief of idols nor the burden of striking wounds. Oh, woe to the pain of misery, for God will destroy in you the murmuring of the Ninevites unless you quickly run to the olive of sanctification that brings forth the good odor of sweetness and the flower of right institution. Why are you bent in these lies, as if you were not blind? But you are blind when you do not foresee that cause in which you were born through Adam's fall, and when you hold it in the arm of embrace, laughing and mocking as if you did not have it. Therefore, flee from this and do not sin, that your salvation may come quickly. See and walk in the right path.

Letter 251: R251: Convent von Zwiefalten to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

From the sisters in Zwiefalten. Hildegard.

Hildegard, illuminated by the special grace of divinity! The humble assembly of the sisters of Zwiefalten rejoices in the heavenly gifts you have received. Divine mercy has wonderfully glorified His omnipotence in you, which, taken from frail clay, He has cared to fulfill with the treasures of His grace in a new order. Therefore, we rejoice in your clarity! and humbly commend ourselves and all our affairs to your prayers. We also ask your kindness that, when you are engaged in divine visions, you send us words of admonition and do not neglect to show us how we should return from the path of negligence to the path of correction. May your affection in Christ be strong.

Letter 252: R252: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Convent von Zwiefalten

To the congregation of sisters in Zwiefalten. Hildegard.

He who sees all and from whom nothing is hidden says: A certain noble man bound to himself with the utmost diligence a bride very beautiful in appearance with sapphire eyes, whose stature was equal and not twisted in any diversity but splendid in all ornaments. She was also very lovable in all her ways, so that every symphony on lyres and all kinds of musical instruments befitted her, being such that she did not want to be a concubine or a dancer in the attire of a harlot, and did not want to wander through various streets, nor speak to the mockery of young men. O vanity and filth of diabolic arrows, and O disgrace of the wantonness of girls, tremble at this word.

When a womanly form withdraws from the union with her husband for the sake of God, not wanting to be joined to a man, oh how great is her nobility then, for she deserves the betrothal of the heavenly King because she has refused a carnal man. And thus she should embrace God and cling to her Lord because she does not have an earthly husband. For she ought to remain as Eve was before God presented her to Adam, when she then looked not to Adam but to God. Thus should a woman do who, for the love of God, refuses a carnal man: she should look to God and not to another man whom she previously did not want. But it is very hard and bitter due to the deceit of the ancient serpent, that the greenness of the flesh should always be dry in itself. Yet when a woman is most strongly armed, so that she places herself in the chamber of the King and embraces the King with the sweetest charity, not wanting to cultivate the office of carnal desire in concupiscence, but wanting to place the face of her soul in God, refusing the pleasure of her flesh, let her look like an eagle at the sun and like a dove through her windows, thinking and striving how to draw her soul away from worldly riches and

delights and from the companionship of a carnal man. And therefore, a woman who does not want to go into the chamber of a carnal man for the love of God ought to be with me in spiritual life, who am without beginning and without end, nor should she be in furtive embraces secretly loving a rustic. But if she does this, she is not with me because she has serpentine ways. Therefore, a woman who burns with such fervor that she cannot leave the world should not go into peril nor ascend a high mountain, lest afterward she sink into a pit because she was first betrothed to me and then went to carnal embraces. For the Virgin Mary was joyful in the warmth of the Holy Spirit, and her virginity flourished. But no womanly form should begin what the Holy Spirit has not sent into her, lest afterward she remain empty. A woman who wants to look to me should not be in the diversity of a dispersed heart through the ambition of this world, nor should she be twisted through the burning grandiloquence of pride, but should be stable in all ornaments of virtues and in the nobility of charity and justice, which dominate in all the splendors of the heavenly King. Now, O multitude of girls, hear what the heavenly voice speaks to you. Do not be concubines nor place your mind in the high vanity of pride, so that you may discern the honor of the King to each according to his state, thinking that it is not possible for me to discern the sun and the moon and the other ornaments of the sky. A harlot regards all things as almost the same and equal, the prince as the rustic. Whoever does this dishonors me, making wisdom similar to ignorance and piety to vanity, and other virtues similar to copper. Now, O girls, do not be dancers in the likeness of the worst manners according to what pleases you, lest you deceive each other in all things if you do this. For a dancer dances for each one according to his vanity. But do not walk with open doors due to the filth of your mind, nor nod with wanton nods through the petulance of your heart's latitude, as if loving in the streets what you despised in the King's embraces, when you place a

rustic in your embraces for the love of the King. Hence, a woman who does not want to have the companionship of a carnal man should in no way be in the open, for this does not befit her, but should remain hidden in body and mind, like a dove in a cave, lest a hawk, that is, a masculine spirit, seize her. Now, O multitude, rise quickly to the first and royal betrothal of your first and principal husband. For He calls you. Amend and correct what has offended Him, and He will receive you into eternal salvation. And you will live.

Letter 253: R253: Adalbert von Disibodenberg to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Adelbert, Prior on Mount Saint Disibod, to Hildegard.

Hildegard, most truly filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit!

Adelbert, an unworthy monk and prior of Mount Saint Disibod, with the brothers of the same place, ascend from virtue to virtue and see the God of gods in Zion. While you send words of admonition to foreign regions and make many desire the path of righteousness, we, who have known you almost from infancy and among whom you were for many years, wonder why you withhold the words of heavenly visions from us who are thirsty for them. For we know how you were raised among us, how you were educated, how you conducted yourself, because you applied yourself to no other task than womanly work, were imbued with no other books than the simple psalter, and loved a good and holy life without complaint. But divine mercy has imbued you with heavenly dew as it wished, and opened to you the greatness of its secrets. And though we ought to rejoice with you in these things, God took you from us against our will and transferred you to other people. Why He did this, we cannot scrutinize or know, but we suffer this in great perturbation, unwilling and willing. For we hoped that the salvation of our place lay in you, but God disposed otherwise than we wished. Now, however, since we cannot resist the will of God, we yield to it and rejoice with you! because you manifest many things hitherto unseen, hitherto unheard through divine revelation, and you open what has hitherto been closed. For filled with the Spirit of God, you write many things which you did not learn from any man! which holy and learned men marvel at. Therefore, although we are far from the saints because we are sinners, we humbly ask that for the glory of the Lord and for the sake of our old and just familiarity, you remember us and extend to us words of consolation and help us before God, so that what is

lacking in us, God may deign to supply through the merits of your prayers. Farewell.

Letter 254: R254: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Monastery von Disibodenberg

To the brothers of Saint Disibod. Hildegard.

In a true vision, I heard a voice speaking against the injustices that both spiritual and secular forces commit against justice, saying: O justice, you are a stranger and foreigner in the city of those who arrange and choose parables of their own will, not yearning for your mysteries nor your friendship, you who are the royal companion of the King. Hence, you cry out because of that condition where no justice rests, and in your distress, you say, "I am greatly ashamed so that I hide my face under my cloak, lest those who lie in wait for me see me." But they say, "Whatever comes from us benefits everyone." Therefore, O justice, you have great zeal, such that whoever resists you is guilty of judgment. And again, in distress, you say, "Where do I come from? From the bosom of the Father. And all regions are gathered with me. But also where all the forms of people and all the institutions of generations are placed, I was there. And thus the pillars of the cloud are raised in me. But now I am the tedium of those who were first rooted in me. Therefore, before I grieve over these things because of the ignorance of the people, I sigh! And like overflowing waters, my roar sounds in the high voice of many waters because of the excess of foolish people in the prattle of their ways and in the noise of dishonesty." Oh, oh, you eagles who have passed through me by the fire of the Holy Spirit and by the water of restoration, like the breaking dawn and like a sparkling gem. Now you sleep and are like foolish animals that sometimes go forward and sometimes go back and sometimes intermingle while walking. But also from this mountain of the children of God, I saw this in mystical inspiration. I saw a mountain of great magnitude, on whose summit sat a great man who held the law of God in both his hands, as if written on a scroll, just as it is written of Moses. And under the

feet of this man, there was a crowd of people circumcised in spirit, who all received the instruments of this law with joy and longing, saying, "O Lord our God, when will we come to You? We willingly obey You." Yet, sometimes they were mixed in a certain whirlwind, and sometimes many crimes were among them, which they washed away with many tears in the sprinkling of the blood of Christ Jesus. For when a man lay in such great sins that he could not lift himself out of them in any vitality by himself, God said, "I will lift man by Myself and plant him anew in the bowels of mercy so that he may reside in the mirror of confession, who could not rescue himself from the bowels of the devil." But I, a poor one, although I saw many crimes in these people, yet I did not see pride in them, which through defiance scorns sinners by throwing stones. But under the feet of these, I saw another crowd of people surrounded by a white cloud, having beautiful faces and looking to heaven! who, however, sometimes approached petulance with the inquiry of many useless things, like fat bulls, so that when they looked to heaven, they aimed their bows and shot arrows against heaven and struck with leaden rods against heaven. And thus they set their mouth against heaven, and their tongue walked through the earth. Therefore, thunders came upon them, and hailstones fell upon them! and many clouds covered them. And they murmured, "Why do such squalors surround us so?" And the grace of God thus answered them, "I gathered you to great blessedness, but in your recklessness, you cast me away when you say, 'Who can reach you, or what word can conquer you, or what hills, or what tongue can strike you?' just as the children of Israel neglected God when through the blessing of Abraham He raised the horn of blessings over them and lifted them into His bosom with the joy of honor. But they murmured in deceit and resisted God in recklessness and forsook holiness through the shedding of Christ's blood. Then the blessing in them went backward and vanished, for they turned to the fall of death. And God built another city of the

church from their sacrifices and holocausts, until all the waters of the wells are drawn into the valley of black clouds. And then all the eagles in the revolving wheel will be gathered into one flock, for they were first in the blessing. But I also saw another crowd of people under the feet of these, before whose eyes a ram hung in thorns of golden color, whom they gazed upon with the scent of myrrh and incense and with a lightning face. And from the hands of that great man who sat on the summit of that mountain, some streams flowed to their breasts. And they cried out with a clear voice to the bosom of wisdom, "God once gathered us in many sacrifices, but we all sinned in many obligations. Hence, we are placed upon the winepress," saying with the prophet, "I have trodden the winepress alone, and from the nations, no man was with me." And again, when the net was cast into the sea and gathered fish of every kind, just as those fishing chose good fish into vessels, so the grace of God chose those to glory who are humble of heart and devout in the fear of the Lord, not intending to seize plunder. Now, however, the first voice that gathered you to the praise of God makes you rooted in goodness like the first who were consecrated in the walls of the temple. But you, O mountain! hear the admonition of God. God has appointed you like Mount Sinai, to sacrifice to Him a sacrifice of praise. Now, however, turn to God and be the king's lampstand so that you do not blush in your first root as the right hand of God has planted you.

Letter 255: R255: Monastery von St. Eucharius in Trier to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

From the monastery of Saint Eucharius. To Hildegard.

To Hildegard, constantly adhering to the embraces of the heavenly bridegroom, and to all those who live with her in Christ! The entire convent of Saint Eucharius in Trier desires what is better than anything else. Whoever strives to do the will of the Father who is in heaven is called the brother, sister, and mother of the Lord. Whoever diligently strives to guide others to improvement, as if nourishing them with milk, will especially attain the dignity of a mother.

Therefore, we do not unjustly revere you above others as a mother in the Lord, from whose breasts of consolation and instruction we are abundantly refreshed in our innermost being. We also magnify Him who alone performs great wonders, who has hidden these things from the wise and prudent until now, and has marvelously revealed them in our days to your humility. We earnestly desire to be roused by the stimuli of your admonition, as God has given you, because we cannot run the way of God's commandments with an enlarged heart without such encouragement. Moreover, know without doubt that we have delighted in your writings, particularly in the book "Scivias," as in all riches. Finally, we humbly ask that we may be assisted before God by your holy prayers and fortified by your counsels.

Letter 256: R256: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Monastery von St. Eucharius in Trier

Response of Hildegard:

You who have clothed yourselves in the tunic of Christ and wish to imitate Him, hear what the Psalmist says: "You make the clouds your chariot; you ride on the wings of the wind." What does this mean? In the constitution of the world, you have made the cloud the ascent of living creatures that are in the height of the air. This is also so: God foresaw that He was going to establish a spiritual people in Himself, as the prophet says, "Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?" The minds of spiritual people are like clouds, which are like the material of luminaries, namely, the sun, moon, and stars. So too, obedience is like the material of humility, charity, and other virtues, in which the faithful fly like doves when they cut off their own desires through the binding of their will, so that through the cavity of innocence they look to the sun as if they were not men in the will of their flesh. And thus the Creator of all things walked upon the wings of the wind when the heavenly Son proceeded in the humility of chastity, a beautiful flower, and so remained in meekness. Whence it is written, "Upon whom shall I rest, if not upon the humble and meek, and the one who trembles at my words?" These are the wings of the spiritual people. But those who lack these are like birds that fall, for they do not have the wings to fly. In these also the multitude of the sea is converted, and the strength of the nations comes. For an innumerable crowd of people runs to these wings. But some among them look to the north through the whirlwind of vain glory and pride and through the excesses of secular ways, trusting in themselves and not following the Psalmist who says, "It is better to trust in the Lord than to trust in princes." What does this mean? It is much better and more useful to look and fly into the cloud through the tunic of Christ

than to trust in oneself, as happened with the fallen angel who in pride wanted to surpass Him before he could stand, but he fell into the abyss like lead. In this pride, too, Adam fled from life and found foreign wandering, in which he looked at his Father as if at a stranger in his exile, whom he had known well before when he was innocent in humility. Thus too, the sons of men trust in themselves, deceived as if having hope in princes. But when God called out to Adam, "Where are you?" He foresaw that the work of His hands would not be utterly lost, but would someday be redeemed, as it is written, "You have redeemed the rod of your inheritance, Mount Zion, where you have dwelt." What does this mean? God remembered man when He crushed the head of the serpent through the woman, where the Word was made flesh. And Mount Zion was where God dwelled in humility. And the Son in the heart of the Father. Now you, gathered congregation, listen, so that you may be Mount Zion. For God had foreseen from the beginning that He wanted to make all creation. The Word of the Father, too, rose as a man in the virgin rod. This rod indeed was the material of all the virtues of holiness, from which you too, O spiritual people, have come. For Eve brought forth the whole human race, but this rod restored it in its blooming when the Son of God came forth from her womb. And thus, O spiritual people, you are Mount Zion, because the Father planted you in His Word. For the Son of the Most High Father dwelt in the tabernacle of Mary the Virgin and came forth from her like a mighty lion, so that the whole world might see Him. He also gathered you, spiritual people, into Himself when you fly to Him like clouds, not carrying your sins in the will of work. For He was without sin. Hence, you also imitate Him if you walk after Him and reject yourselves lest you sin, not being like the dust that the wind drives from the face of the earth, nor like the venom of asps, nor like lead in rushing waters. But if you run in vain glory, you are like dust that is scattered here and there, and which does not sow the

fruit of justice nor plant the chosen vine but produces great fame and harms your souls. When you are in the malice of pride, you conceive the incurable venom of asps that kills you. And when the unrest of minds arises among you, you are like lead that falls heavily into a well. For vain glory and malice are the entrails of pride. And those who are thus entangled with the unrest of minds are served by hatred and envy. Hence, peace and security flee there, and the charity of Christ withdraws. And those who are in these evils will fall like lead in rushing waters, because they do not have the wings of elevation. For the zeal of the Lord in His vengeance calls out against them, as it thundered before when He cast the proud enemy into the abyss, as the Psalmist says, "Lift up your hands against their pride unto the end; how great the malice of the enemy is in the sanctuary." For God raised the most holy works when He divided the light from the darkness. And there pride fell with all the entrails of the devil to the end when looking to the north, he set his shield to nothing, where he also utterly perished. But afterward, pride again built many cities without length of days in men and added pains to pains and made ruins in a multitude of distresses, where men said, "We do not know God, nor do we want to worship Him."

And thus the enemy has wrought evil in the holy place. Now, the living light speaks to the children of this crowd: You are the walls of the temple, for the early church planted you. Therefore, flee from vain glory, pride, and the whirlwind of many disturbances. Now, with living eyes, see these things, and with inward ears, hear. I do not see your place in dispersion, although it will suffer many scourges. Therefore, live and watch in God. In a true vision, I also saw some in this congregation glowing like the dawn, some shining like sapphire, and some shining like the light of the stars. For those who glow like the dawn have the fear of the Lord and willingly keep the precepts of the regular law for God's sake, although they seem to deviate sometimes through the flesh like a victim led to slaughter.

But those who shine like sapphire have the love of God, and therefore they do not commit grievous sins, although they sin and willingly chastise themselves for their offenses, and this they have as a custom. But those who shine like the light of the stars have benevolence, and therefore they do not quarrel with people but retain the playfulness of childish ways, willingly abstaining from and despising grave sins.

I also saw others in the blackness of bitter smoke because of their filthy habits, in which some are embittered because of their selfishness, loving their possessions and therefore not loving spiritual habits, often afflicting those who are in the three aforementioned states. And I heard a voice from heaven saying: As long as this congregation remains in these three states, it will not be abandoned by God. But to those who were in the aforementioned blackness, I heard the same voice saying: Arise, O north wind, and come, O south wind! Blow upon my garden that its spices may flow out. This means: Drive away the evil of iniquity, and come, the good of justice, and water the planting of holiness with virtues so that the works that do not wither may shine in it. For the north wind are the quarrelers who want to trample the sweet and useful herbs of virtues with words of contention, excuses of greed, and provocations of injuries, just as the north wind topples everything. But those who are afflicted in this way learn patience and cry out to God with tearful groans for their sins and those of others, so that they sometimes become weary of sinning, and the smoke of spices rises from their hearts, which the angels receive. And thus, through the north wind, greenness is granted to the good. Those who love their possessions also impose some things on those who shine in the three aforementioned ways to confuse them, and in necessary causes of their obediences, they seek how to afflict them, often involving themselves in the uncleanness of the flesh, like a pig wallowing in filth, and with the nods of serpent-like eyes, sometimes grievously

burdening others. But you who love injustice, remember this admonition so that you may recognize your own will's faculties as idolatry and that they are separated from the angelic orders, namely, the spiritual people, just as the idol of deception is separated from the true God. And also, abandon other sins and flee to the flowing fountain to be washed. Look at the washing of that covenant by which you left the world, so that you may depart from sins and strive to make your sacrifice rich so that you may persevere in the good you have begun. For whenever a person sacrifices their will on the wheel of their flesh, it is a sacrifice to God. This is acceptable to God as the sacrifice of Abraham, when he bound his son to sacrifice him in obedience to God. For he tames his hands who abandons wicked works, and he binds his feet who restrains the paths of his own will, and he bows in obedience as Isaac bowed his head to the sword, and he tames his body who rejects carnal desire. In these is the victory that carries the banner, which smells of good reputation and sweet odors of virtues. Whoever has this walks securely before all his enemies. In this way, the sacrifice will become rich like a fattened calf, which was without any blemish, through which the soul fails in leanness, for the good is full and rich. Christ, being wearied with injuries, did not sin, and in this, He sanctified the patience of the saints. Therefore, prepare your hearts for His battles, who gave you the example, and cast away the anxiety of those things you do not need, and strive to appear in the Alpha and the Omega. For you are overshadowed in the sensuality of sins, but when you rise from sins, the beautiful forms of virtues will appear in you. Therefore, may the right hand of God protect you.

Letter 257: R257: Prior C. von Cîteaux to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

To the reverend Hildegard, to be embraced in the arms of honor and sincere affection, to the lady and mistress of the sisters of St. Robert (in latin: In Pinge)!

C., although unworthy, prior and the whole poor and humble congregation of the brothers of Cistellensians among the choirs of virgins follow the lamb wherever he goes. Separated by the distance of places, because we cannot physically enjoy your desirable presence, we rejoice to greet and address you through the office of letters. Indeed, we honor you in Christ as a superior and hope to have you as a beloved mother and mediator before Christ.

Having heard of your good reputation, your faithful administration in God, for your stability, and the service of prayer, we offer our ministry to God for your salvation. Therefore, O lady, we write this greeting letter to you so that you may remember us and persuade those subject to you to do the same. For we have heard many things about you, which make us greatly rejoice, that you can search the mysteries of God and reveal not a few of His secrets.

Accordingly, we ask your kindness that whatever in us and in our monastic order displeases you, or rather the divine eyes, you do not hesitate to describe to us as God reveals to you. Farewell.

Letter 258: R258: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Prior C. von Cîteaux

Hildegard:

I, the living fountain, speak to those who, for my name's sake, are clothed in my tunic. They are strangers in the hunt of the world. Oh, it is to be mourned and lamented that heaven is broken and the day is darkened. Therefore, the denarius must be recalled into the court of the voice of praise. O sons of Israel, why do you corrupt the sweetest charity, which flows in me as I look deeply into the depths with the fullest work? And because it flows in me, therefore living waters also flow from it. But it stands in the form of a virgin, for as in a virgin there are sweetest embraces because of her integrity, so also charity has the sweetest embraces of virtues. But now it mourns because the reckless tear it apart through the garrulousness of their murmuring. Hence, it even flees from them to that height from which it came and weeps because its children, whom it nourished with full breasts, are failing, unwilling to be cleansed from the rot of their flying minds. Oh, those wretched ones, why do they join the misery of alienation and wandering, removing themselves from the womb of the royal nuptials of the new bride, who is always prepared for her bridegroom like a virgin for her man, although she has not yet been joined in knowledge, but remains in her own uncorrupted integrity?

And because they separate themselves from that bride, they are therefore darkened and clouded as if they had broken the sky. What is this? Just as the firmament of the sky, with all its ornaments, that is, the sun, moon, and stars, illuminates the world, and just as a craftsman makes wood from wood, stones from stones, and other instruments from other instruments, so should these shine for the remaining people and show the good path. But charity is torn in them, so that virginity, which should shine in them like the sun, and

widowhood like the moon, and the rest of the people like stars in their light, fail, because the sweet maternal womb does not warm them, but a tortuous woman full of wrinkles and blackness, and full of viperous manners and grating teeth, horrible in all that she does, nourishes them according to the customs of pigs, who ought to have been holy and elect and renouncing the world. For they tear the garment of innocence in themselves with thorny manners, in anger, and corrupt their vital parts in ignominy, and break their heads in anger, blinding their living eyes in despair, and defiling all their garments with the folly of their manners, and imagining themselves wise above their teachers.

Alas, alas, sons of Israel, did He not constitute you in your first origin as a mystical gift of God, for the most gentle Father wished to overcome the ancient serpent in your angelic order, who vomited the worst disease of presumption like a rotten corpse in himself. O beautiful flowers and companions of angels, why do you eat the serpent's food, namely seeking among each other the sluggish and stinking company of great schisms like a deadly crime? And why do you ascend the restless manners of frequent questioning and investigation of many vanities, not discerning what is given to each man according to his measure? Walk suitable and fitting paths without the flying wind of scattering. But wherever you find a vain mountain, you seize it and confirm it without delay and build upon it, ceaselessly working in vain upon it, like a useless craftsman who makes a useless vessel that cannot stand because it is unstable. Now, therefore, my sons, grasp your beautiful mother, namely my friend charity, and embrace her. But I say to you, some, sitting on swift horses and armed with precious and strong armor, shining, had turned to the west to fight against those who came from the west. To their right was a valley of great length, like a deep road, and to their left a great and tall forest entirely covered in snow on its branches. From which many small and unarmed men, coming out, fled into the

forest in great fear when they saw those armed ones, saying, "Woe, who are these?" But to strike fear into those armed ones, they made great noises and sounds in the same forest. Whereupon some of those armed, indignant, drawing their swords, brandished them to strike. And a voice came from on high, saying, "Turn your swords into their scabbards until the time of the eradication of times." And they put their swords back into their scabbards.

And behold, some others, naked in body, sitting on horses, with only a little cloth around their chest and belly, came. When those in the forest saw them, they ran to them, taking their horses by the neck and tails, and also holding the naked ones by their legs and feet, making great leaps and laughs in their games with them and they with them, saying, "O companions, play with us." Then some of those armed, fatigued by their arms, turned to this valley next to them, and dismounting from their horses and taking off their armor, which shone with much brightness, put them down. And thus sitting idly in the same valley, they said, "Who can always fight with these little ones? Let us therefore allow them to play." Which when the same little men saw, going into the forest, they ran to them and made their games around them. But these neither played with them nor forced them to leave, but only sat idly with their arms put down, watching their games.

And again a voice sounded from on high, saying, "These who have laid down their arms should not be called principal teachers in the king's palace, because they are weary of battle." Now, my sons, attend. This understanding is directed to you. For good and useful prelates and others who despise secular things sit armed in the swift course of good works with diligent care, so that they may fight against the devil. To their right is the path of righteousness, and to their left is the unrest of many vicissitudes, from which many vices proceed, which often flee terrified from the same armed ones, and often in their madness strike terror into them. Whereupon some of

them, indignant, when they are unwilling to suffer the injury inflicted on them patiently, prepare for vengeance, but divine inspiration advises them to rest until God by His grace eradicates the same injuries. And so they cease from the agitation of their vengeance.

And some others who seem to have despised earthly things show themselves running in vain in this way, for they are naked of good works, although they cover themselves in pretense. Therefore, the vices mock them, and in great derision, exercise their games with them. But also some of the aforementioned prelates and others who ought to have utterly despised earthly things are weary with tedium and abandon the diligence of good care on the straight path, and negligently idle, say that they cannot always fight with those vices. Hence, the same vices mock them, but they neither fully accept them nor entirely drive them away, but sit in the torpor of negligence, observing their games. Therefore, as it is plainly shown, they are neither useful teachers nor useful fighters before God, because they grow sluggish in tedium to their own salvation.

This understanding, O followers of my tunic, is directed to you. O spiritual people, who say you walk well and rightly, why do you not imitate the works of the Lamb who was meek, gentle, humble, chaste, and obedient to the command of His Father, and patient unto the sacrifice of His body for you? Rise, therefore, as the mystical gift of God first planted you to the fellowship of angels. For sometimes you do not know what you do, wishing to ascend a mountain you cannot grasp, hence sometimes you also fall into the valley because you begin what you cannot accomplish. But you are also restless in your minds, wishing to be holy where there are neither merits nor rewards of good and right work. Therefore, you are like strangers who wish to have what they cannot grasp. Strengthen yourselves, therefore, and fortify your hearts and run the ways of God, for a reward will be given to him who works, not to

him who seeks work as if he saw it in a mirror, hence also he is deceived in his estimation.

Letter 259: R259: Cathedral Chapter von St. Martin to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

To Hildegard, the lady and mother of the monastery of Blessed Robert, revered and beloved. From A. E. H., alas priests in name only, with the other brothers of their society living under the protection of Blessed Martin, with the most sincere affection of both persons and with the innermost devotion of the heart.

O chosen and beloved servant of holiness and mother of many who follow sanctity, dearest, we have heard much about you, things that confer the fragrance of life to many. Therefore, we flee to your kindness, thirsting in our hearts for those things that are of God. For we, who from childhood have been consecrated to the service of God, so that we might faithfully serve our Creator in the sacred orders of the divine office, when we have reached the priesthood, where we ought to live worthily and blamelessly, often neglect the things of the spirit and do the things of the flesh. For although we ought to be the eye of contemplation, the ear of obedience, the nose of discernment, the mouth of truth, the hand of just operation, and the foot in the path of righteousness and an example of virtues to the people of God, we are more the odor of death and the scandal of offense than the rock of solidity. Hence, many evils have befallen us because, from the sanctuary of the Lord, so to speak, we fall into the mud of filthiness.

But you, O pious mother and knower of God's secrets, hear us as we earnestly and humbly beseech you to bring forth the words of divine admonition to us, to correct and admonish us. For although we have even a slight knowledge of the scriptures, we nonetheless long to hear you, who receive true and marvelous understanding from the highest Teacher and not from man, with the utmost devotion. Now may God pour into you what you might devoutly pour out for us who are thirsting. Farewell.

Letter 260: R260: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Clergy

To clerics of various orders:

The voice of the living wings says: O you who are the support of stones and the girdle of the members of various people, hear what I say to you. Run on smooth paths to the office of the sacrifices of the law. And let your members have constriction in your loins, as this figure shows through the mystical gift of God. "Gird your sword upon your thigh, O mighty one." For divinity has looked upon the simplicity of manners in a humble girl and rested in the sweetest chastity, which the greenness of earthly things did not touch, but the heavenly warmth in its secret. Then the true man arose, as from dry ground which the plow has not broken, and whose fruit is not sown, but which brought forth a flower from the warmth of the sun. Hence he was girded with the most powerful sword, that is, pure and sharp true justice, because there was no carnal heat in him in the neglect of sins. But as a son is from a father, noble from noble, king from king, and each from his own kind, so priests are constituted from me, just as the father gives his substance to his son, as it is also said, "My inheritance is Israel," which is accounted to the highest priesthood from mercy and grace and truth. This testimony is delivered to you through me, just as a warrior with a great army leaves it to his son. Therefore, priests should imitate their father and lord, so that as he walked, they also walk in the constriction of their body.

But if a priest has a crime in the rottenness of the flesh or in the petulance of the throat and lasciviousness, let him immediately rise and seek a physician and vomit it out as if he had drunk poison, nor keep it in himself longer as if it were his own. Therefore, listen. A certain lord had two regions, one moist and the other dry. In the moist, there were many vicissitudes of various negotiations, as in Tarsus, Tyre, Macedonia, and Ethiopia. In Tarsus, understand those running quickly and growing in every matter, but nevertheless

laboring greatly; in Tyre, however, laboring in distress and sometimes failing in great necessity; in Macedonia, indeed, burning in drought like that fruit which sometimes proceeds, sometimes fails, as the wolf shows, who sometimes devours, sometimes leaves, sometimes snatches, and sometimes suffocates; in Ethiopia, however, stealthily feasting and reveling in poisonous tyranny and burning in impurity. In the dry region, however, were wealthy men, having the beauty of herbs and flowers which man did not sow, and remaining in the contemplation of their lord, where also there was the sweetest odor and the most pleasant sound, as prefigured in Abel, who began to do good, and in Abraham, who showed obedience, and in Moses, who gave the instruction of souls through the instituted precepts of sacrifices, and in the Son of God, who fulfilled all good things.

This understanding is directed to the world, which grows in the secular people with the rising children, and which decreases in the spiritual people, who fail in their seed. But God chose principal teachers over the common people for the instruction of their souls. And the Son of God came, the supreme Teacher, as it is written: "Behold, the Lord will appear on a white cloud, and with him the multitude of saints," having written on his vestment and thigh, "King of kings and Lord of lords." For the Son of God appeared in the innocence of a simple girl as in a cloud, and placed his tabernacle in the sun, when the mind of the same virgin was wonderfully illuminated, where she said, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word." And thus a great column rose in her above all the nascent kinds, when the Son of God came forth as a bridegroom from his chamber, born of the sweetest virgin as in a sweet sound and in the most pleasant desire, like a bridegroom sweetly unites his bride to himself in his mind. Hence many and admirable virtues appeared with him, excelling the old legal institution in good works.

And so it is written on his vestment and thigh, "King of kings and Lord of lords," because his flesh sweetly sweated from the virgin and not from the thigh of a man, thus ascending above all creatures, like a king who rules over men, for sin did not produce him, but the most powerful force of divine power which foresaw all creatures before they came into the world. Hence he administered all the institutions of the law to his members, like a good steward who shows the people subject to him what should be present or absent in their needs, as it is written again: "You will rule them with a rod of iron; you will dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." For in the most powerful strength of divinity, the living fountain shone forth, showing the purest and most constant legal precepts through himself, thus commanding justice to the righteous with a rod of iron and breaking and establishing each according to what was just, as a potter breaks one vessel and makes another.

Now listen, O my imitators. From the beginning of the world, my people had predecessors and teachers. Why, then, do you bring forth indignation and audacity and vicissitude in various manners and in the multitude of pride, as if you were making new heavens and the ivory height of mountains, which instruments the wind easily disperses and which are trampled by men, so that you even take away from your souls the ten minas and the denarius, which is the reward of the heavenly kingdom in righteous men? Grasp, however, discipline, that is, the legal and instituted precepts in your members, and be such in your thoughts, words, and deeds, that you may be pure as a holocaust in the priestly office, avoiding that there be poisonous words in you in the vanity of this world. For the transgression of the law does not benefit you. But faithfully carry the light in your hands, so that all the people may run to you. These are the precepts of the law, like a great mountain, upon which the placed light does not lie hidden. Therefore, have discipline in the girding of your loins, shining with good examples to the other peoples, for you

have the rod of ruling them. Hence, also be diligent, lest at any time the Lord be angry and you perish from the just way, for you ought to walk by the example of the Son of God on the path of good works, all of which were prefigured in the sacrifice of calves and lambs concerning your office.

For in the Old Testament, the priests did not languish in their loins, because none girded in his loins preceded them. But now the sun of justice has shone forth. Therefore, walk in him, keeping your chastity, for it was not a calf, not a ram, nor a victim lamb that was suspended for you on the wood of the cross, but the great and good shepherd was given for you to the passion of the cross. Imitate him in your works. Be angry against injustice and do not sin, that is, do not have hatred, envy, or oppressive pressure in the mockery of your heart when you see the fall of men because of their foolish manners, but join them in mercy and correct them in meekness. And do not have in your estimation this peak as if you were holy because of the tonsure of your flesh, where you say in your hearts, "The Lord has chosen us in holiness!" nor should anyone precede us in the peak of virtue.

And why do you disdain the radiant face in those who have embraced my tunic through the circumcision of their mind and who imitate the angels in ordination, who are the mirror of my face, so that they follow them through the mortification of the temporal world? For an angel announced salvation to all people. But also in Abraham and Jacob and in the rod of Aaron, the angels announced the salvation of the people. Why, then, could not and should not the imitators of angels and my tunic provide for the salvation of the people due to the urgent necessity of those in need? But you be in the militia of holiness and be moved in your chambers, so that humility in you builds a tower with windows of the virtues of good works and with the caves of holy medicine for each according to his measure.

Let your inner secrets see what works are in you. Therefore, diligently provide that holiness in you be gold and not lead, because Jacob was raised to the height of felicity, but Esau was constrained in the descent of pride. Thus your mind moves in the two parts of spiritual life. Now strengthen and fortify yourselves in all good things, so that you do not fail.

Letter 261: R261: Priests von Amorbach to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

To Hildegard, teacher of St. Rupertsberg, from O. C. V., sinners and priests in name only, and the entire congregation of brothers living in Amerbach:

With the most radiant lamp, we strive to enter into the eternal nuptials. The living light, worker of all good, to which every living soul and those pre-elected to the tenth number are co-workers, if they are found in their purity. Nevertheless, according to the understanding of those receiving it, it is participated in differently from the blessed. For just as those supreme organs of the royal court are inflamed more ardently, the closer they are and almost in the midst of the fountain of clarity, the lower ranks of angels, the more remote they are from that origin, shine back from that principal light differently and more weakly. Similarly, the incorporeal spirits, although they are preordained for life, some more abundantly, some more sparsely, are always irradiated by the impulse of clarity from the majesty, and are elevated with the most distant mobility to attain that beatific beginning.

For some souls are so absorbed in that sea of clarity that they seem to see and sense nothing else but the presence of that all-vivifying light. By the brilliance of these souls, other souls still weighed down by earthly darkness are often reflected upon and made fit for the receptacle of that clarity, by which they are more subtly enlightened. Therefore, since you, most reverend mother, have ascended more closely to that clarity, let the splendor bursting from your heart illuminate our consciences, so that through the rays of both admonition, exhortation, and correction, our darkness may be diminished.

For because iniquity has abounded and charity has grown cold through the Roman schism, we suffer the darkness of error. And because the sun of justice has been obscured by the clouds of iniquity, the moon, which is the Church, has deviated in many ways from the order of religion. Nevertheless, because the words of Christ do not pass away if they remain, and he himself testifies, "Behold, I am with you until the end of the age," although almost the entire world is now enveloped in the darkness of error, a certain ray of ancient grace shines in you lest the whole nation perish.

For the order of monks is bereft, the order of clerics is crippled, and the order of nuns falters. And while the spiritual ones thus exceed in religion, the seculars utterly neglect the law established for them by the Lord. For among other crimes by which they consign God to oblivion, they abandon legitimate marriages and join themselves to others at their will. They commit murders and think themselves great for it, and anyone who is found free of these stains is deemed inactive. Therefore, the priests who ought to cry out and speak the truth with correction are now forced to be silent.

Now you, O venerable mother, since, as we read in your writings, you have often directed admonitions to the spiritual, we also ask most earnestly that you direct them to the seculars, for it is necessary that they be loudly rebuked with severe and frequent corrections, as they scarcely deign to endure any rebukes. We hope that they will incline their minds more attentively to your words, for they believe and know that you speak through divine vision and command, rather than through our words, whom they see wavering in many transgressions. Farewell.

Letter 262: R262: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Laypeople

To secular people of various populations, Hildegard says:

O throngs of people, born and growing through divine wisdom, hear what I, serene light and maker of all, say to you. Your planting was in my heart on the original day of all creation. And when I created man, I made an instrument which the devil derided. This is to say, I gave him a law which the devil through his evil brought down, which evil is not mine, for I am full and most powerful and sharpest good. But it befitted God to perform such a great work through himself, that could operate many and diverse works, which man is. For God is neither made nor created nor touched by the vicissitude of times, but always exists, which a wheel having neither beginning nor end designates. He also has no deficiency, but all living things proceed from his disposition, and he overcame death. How? Listen, O man. Evil fell by the most powerful force of divinity, which never began to live, but which always lives. For when the living sphere sensed that it was made and created by God, it seized evil, which God, who is whole, destroyed, for evil has such great strength that it was not fitting for anyone to overcome it except he who is without beginning.

He also overcame evil through his shoulder. How? Through man. What is this? He sent a man in soul and body. In both lay a great mystery. For virginity brought forth man, that is, the greatest and most precious gift in the highest priest, through whom God fully destroyed this evil. O most beautiful forms of men, why do you sleep in negligence when God has established you in great glory? God gave you the greatest law when he placed man in paradise. And with the same love he made him, by which he wished his son to become man, to overcome that evil which had arisen against him. Thus God wished to overcome evil through the sweetest bodily form

of man, in whom the devil thought he would have his victory, wherefore he began to mock him with his temptations, not knowing that he would be completely overcome by him.

Therefore, O men, do not weary yourselves in the foolishness of your ways, as if you had no law. This is not so. For I gave you a law, that you should not eat the food of sensible evil, but you transgressed my command and desired that knowledge which expelled you into exile. But you, O man, say, "Why do I know evil?" In this, you contradict me, your creator, as did he who wished to overcome me. But I do not want evil, nor does it touch my secrets. Yet in it, your eyes are darkened. And since you know evil, why do you do it? How could my creation be empty, without utility? For each creature that does not live in rationality or sensitivity has in itself two useful things and one that perishes. Two, namely, one in the fatness of form and the other in its greenness, and one that perishes in dryness. So also man has two in him, namely, the soul and the body, the soul in virtues, the body in operation, knowing also the evil which is like that which perishes in dryness. Otherwise, there would be no creation.

For when Adam received the commandment, he knew that which did not touch me and that which was contrary to me and my command was to be neglected. But when he desired to have it, he knew it indeed as an option, but not yet in operation, just as the heavenly angels know evil but do not do it. When Adam did evil in action, he knew it sensibly and completed it in guilty taste, whence he fell into death, which he found who first opposed himself to me, wherefore he also fell from the heavenly ones into abjection. But you, O man, do not know what you are saying in this. The deceitful deceiver deceives you, teaching you contrary things. When I gave you the law, I did not command you to commit fornication, adultery, murder, robbery, incarcerations, nor to imprison anyone you did not make, but I commanded you to multiply in your children through rightful

institution and not through lust, and to possess the earth, cultivating it in labor in wheat and wine, and in other necessities which pertain to your need. Therefore, you ought to keep my law and not destroy it. For I commanded you to love your children in rightful love and not in poisonous adultery, but you act as if you were free to do whatever you wish and to perpetrate all the evil you can.

Why then do you cast away from yourselves the bond of your law, saying, "It is not instituted for us to have and exercise the constraint of discipline as if we were celestial?" The world does not allow us to be celestial, and also our children, and fields, sheep, oxen, and other livestock, and all other things we possess hinder us from this intention. All these things God gave us. Why then do you forget him who created you and who gave you all these things? Since he gives you what is necessary, sometimes he allows you to have it and sometimes he takes it away. But you say, "It is not ours to have a good and constrained life, but it belongs to the clerics and other spiritual men." Therefore, listen, you who are not diligent in these matters of yours. You are more bound by all these spiritual things because God commanded you to live as you have been told. For spiritual men refuse to have this law which is enjoined upon you, wherefore they are free, because the bond of your law, which is specially imposed upon you, does not bind them. But they kiss me in the embraces of charity when they leave the world for my sake, ascending above the mountain of sanctification, and thus they will be dear sons. But you are as servants by the bond of your law specially imposed upon you.

Now therefore understand me and keep your law, lest when your Lord comes, your conscience accuse you of having destroyed his precepts, for you have been held in great affection, since the innocent lamb was placed in the winepress of the cross for your crimes.

Therefore, O dear children, because of your most beloved formation, hear and understand me. But O crowd, why do you rage, who through the madness of your fury despise me? What are you doing in such heinous crimes through the destruction of the flesh, that you kill a man like yourself? This evil was discovered by the estimation of the first lost angel, who wanted to destroy me, but he could not make it happen as he thought he could, wherefore he went into perdition because of his pride. But because Adam knew and loved me, and kissed my commandments in his will, he wanted to observe them, except that the devil led him into disobedience. Therefore, it was necessary for me to liberate him from the penalty of death because the worst deceiver had deceived him.

For the same devil, in all these things, did not taste any good, but in the perverse sight of pride looked to the north, for in all other aspects of the higher realms, outwardly observing me with indignation, he doubted my existence in the north because I had, as it were, covered my power there with a wing in a whirlwind, signifying that my power was to cast down the evil he thought to accomplish. Thus, in this perverse will of his, he was cast down. Then you, O evil of homicide, raged stubbornly with his counsel. When the devil saw man created, he began to sift all his evil, seducing man into disobedience as if through opinion, because he did not see in him the same malice as in himself, wherefore he began to touch and lead him deceitfully as if to an honorable use, so that man would consent to him. And so man consented to the devil. Then the devil rejoiced in himself that he had overcome man, for man did what he wanted.

But in man, there was not as much evil as in the devil, for the devil envied God and wanted to destroy him, and without any counsel began evil. Man, however, heard God's command but only desired to be like him, and, with the deceiver's counsel, did not obey God. Afterwards, the devil, seeing the original good which began to rise

in Abel, who tasted my goodness in his works, fiercely raged within himself and persuaded man to commit homicide, that man might destroy man, just as he wanted to destroy me, which could not be, for no one can overcome my strength. And so, with the devil's persuasion, homicide was committed, and the devil, rejoicing in himself, said, "I cast man out of paradise by my strength, and now I make man serve me again on earth. For the instrument of the Most High is divided by another instrument like itself in homicide. I could not overcome the Most High, for I saw neither the top nor the bottom in him, but now I have his instruments that do all my will, both by killing each other and by fulfilling all my other persuasions. Oh, how great a power I have in these, for what I could not do in the height of heaven, this creature does to another like itself with my instigation, and does more than I did, for it does what I wanted and could not."

And from these deeds, the devil had great joy, for Cain killed his brother Abel. Hence, hell, by just judgment, burned more fiercely with fire than before that homicide. But I, who am the most piercing light, say: "Alas, alas, alas for homicide, which the devil's persuasion has arisen to cast down good work. O woe to this evil, where innocence lost its integrity." Wherefore the earth mourns because it drinks the sweat of blood where man kills man. Therefore, heaven mourns, and also the other elements grieve, sprinkled as it were with the color of blood, for they are subject to man according to man's cause and necessity. O murderers, you fall into great ruin when through corporal killing you separate what I have joined in man. For when man commits this evil in the rashness of his work, the voice of the blood that is thus shed flies to the heights, wailing in the pain of the same penalty, so that the elements, terrified, take up that cry and carry it upwards, because the soul, due to the pain of the flesh of its slain dwelling, wails until the heavenly judge in his zeal hears its cry.

Therefore, O men, hear what has been said: "Behold, the voice of your brother Abel's blood cries to me from the ground." The soul gives a great lamentation in the dwelling of its body when it senses it cast down in killing. But the souls of the saints whose bodies are killed for my name, thus in the fall of their bodies, cry out, "Avenge, O Lord, our blood which has been shed," and they carry this cry with the heavenly host to the heavens, for my temple in them has been destroyed. However, the souls of those men who, through their insults and crimes, cause their bodies to be killed, bring their lament to the elements, but they cannot lift it up to the heavenly secrets, for in their wickedness they first strike themselves, causing them to be justly killed by another. But in whatever way a man is killed by another man, God justly examines that cause according to the will of the striker and the merits of the fallen, for man is made in the image and likeness of God.

But you who burn with this homicide, hear this: O wanderers in these swift crimes, your burial would be in Gehenna, if not for the immaculate Lamb who was offered on the cross for the redemption of the world, who looks upon the piercing of his nails and the shedding of his blood. For because of these crimes which you perpetrate in burning with homicide, your proud enemy rejoices, thinking he can hold man subject to him in his power. But when my Son came into the world, the same devil, seeing him converse among men, said, "Behold, another Adam has come, and I do not know where he is from. For the first Adam, God created from the clay of the earth, but I do not know where this one came from. His mother sees and knows him as her son and loves him, but I do not know from whom she conceived him, for I do not know her to have a man in conceiving. For her flesh is intact in virginity. Where are these things from?" I have man in such great power that no one can take him from me, for he killed his brother, and because in all his other works he fulfilled my will. Therefore, I think that no one can

take him from me, for I hold him by just judgment. Thus the ancient enemy doubted until my Son, suspended on the cross, descended to hell and broke it, to free man.

How? In his passion, his sweat washed away the shipwreck of lust that swells in the fervor of human blood, and his trembling wiped away the sins of their unjust union, and the binding he suffered mercifully dissolved the bondage that disobedience brought upon men, and the blood of his wounds wiped away the crimes of murderers. He, suspended on the cross, took the bitterness of the cup, through which the most bitter wrath, to which all evils of vice adhere, was extinguished, and thus in his body tasted death corporally, through which he completely destroyed all the instruments of the devil, in which man desired to be like God. And thus, in all these signs of his torments, he descended to hell and broke it and bound the power of the ancient enemy. Then the same devil was ashamed that he had not known such strong strength, which so strongly overcame him in the pit of hell. And in this way, his confidence that he could retain man was utterly destroyed, so that no man in such great crimes can exist whose wounds cannot be healed if he takes care to cleanse them through penance.

Wherefore, praise be to God. Now let the repentant publican rejoice and the repentant sinner have a share in true joy, for all the heavens will rejoice over them when they see him who has snatched them from death with his wounds. Thus, if they want to rise to the heavens and flee that lie which they have despised me for their evil desires, where they have not looked at my will but have deceived themselves. For if they look back to me and forsake their evil deeds in pure confession, saying thus, "We have sinned, Lord," the whole heavenly host will rejoice in their redemption because they have done penance.

O dearest children, remember your pious creator, who has redeemed you from all the plagues of your crimes, and who has cleansed you in the blood of his beloved Son from the worst evil of homicide. O woe to this evil which Cain wrought because of the shame of his anger, which is the companion of death. For your end, which causes the dissolution of your body, adheres to you in great pains through all your veins, feeling and showing in its pains that Abel ended his bodily life in pains through homicide, when his brother through the evil of the first murder forced his soul to leave the dwelling of his body. Now may there be salvation and redemption in the blood of my beloved Son for those who are diligent in running to true penance for their sins.

Letter 263: R263: Volmar von Disibodenberg to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Volmar, the provost of Saint Robert, to his beloved mother, Hildegard.

To Hildegard, the reverend lady, most sweet mother, most holy teacher, and similar to God in the monastery of blessed Robert, most truthful and most proven. Volmar, her son, though unworthy, and the whole united flock of her maidens with the others adhering to her and serving God and Saint Robert, though tepidly, in due subjection, in due obedience, and with the affection of daughters in due love, from the breasts of her consolation in the present age, so that they may be consoled and made participants of the heavenly homeland after this sojourn of exile.

Although, O most sweet mother, we see you daily with fleshly eyes, we hear you with fleshly ears, and daily, as is right, we devote ourselves to you and understand that the Holy Spirit speaks to us through you, we cannot express your absence without tears, yet we do not doubt that as it pleases God, it sometimes becomes incumbent upon us that we shall no longer see you with carnal eyes. There is no man who lives and does not see death. Then our sorrow and misery will be greater than our present joy. Where then will be the response to all those seeking answers to their questions? Where then will be the new interpretation of the Scriptures? Where then the voice of unheard melody and the voice of an unheard tongue? Where then the new and unheard sermons on the feasts of the saints? Where then the revelation concerning the souls of the deceased?

Where then the manifestation of past, present, and future events? Where then the explanation of the natures of diverse creatures, given by divine grace, with the sweetest and humblest manners and with maternal affection, overflowing to all from your heart? Oh, how

great is the divine compassion in its gifts. Oh, the empty cares of men. Oh, vanity of vanities. Why do many, through the difficulties of the roads in distant regions of the world, vainly attempt the teachings of various doctrines? Why do they, afflicted by thirst, hunger, cold, through the contentious declamation of disputes, through the night watches, toil over the profundities, even the enigmas, of sentences? Indeed, we surely know that they endure all these not with a simple eye of intention but either for the cause of simoniacal corruption, and therefore, profiting little or nothing, they do not reach their goal, rather, through their contumacy, they seem to extinguish the spark of the Spirit of God in them, thus abusing the knowledge given from above to their shame among modern scholars.

The spirit of prophecy and vision, revived in the organ of the more fragile mass without the aid of an external instrument, brings forth such things that cannot be comprehended by reason, for he instructs whom he wills and breathes where he wills. Hence, it seems most manifestly fulfilled here that God is said to have chosen the foolish and weak things of the world to confound the wise and strong. Indeed, we speak of such things not to derogate from your simplicity, dearest mother, through any motive of envy for so great a gift granted to you who are devoted to study, nor do we seek to glorify ourselves in vain, who are particularly yours and frequently remain with you and diligently hear your voice, to show that their diligence in labor is worth little in comparison to the chastity of goodness and piety for seeking and acquiring the subtlety of true doctrine, for in vain does the teacher move his lips outside unless the Spirit is within to inform the hearts of the listeners.

Many signs of virtues, many works of God and the Holy Spirit appear in you that we could or would say. For it is the task of others to praise and preach you, but ours to admire, venerate, and love you. Since you have better known all these things through the experience

of the matter itself, and since a few words suffice for the understanding of the wise, we omit to say more and give thanks to God who can do all things, who gave you to us, and who enlightened you with his Spirit for the glory of his name and the salvation of many, humbly and earnestly beseeching him to grant you bodily health and mental strength, so that his gift poured out in you may be abundantly distributed for the edification of the whole Church.

Letter 264: R264: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to the Convent von Rupertsberg

To the congregation of her sisters, Hildegard. O daughters, who have followed the footsteps of Christ in the love of chastity, and who have chosen me, a poor one, in the humility of subjection as your mother for heavenly exaltation, not by myself but by divine revelation, I speak to you through maternal feelings.

I found this place, namely the resting place of the relics of Blessed Robert the Confessor, to whose patronage you have fled, in evident miracles by the will of God as a sacrifice of praise, and with the permission of my superiors, I came to it and freely attracted it to myself and to all those following me with divine assistance.

Afterwards, however, by the admonition of God, I returned to the mount of Blessed Disibod, from which I had withdrawn by permission, and I fulfilled this petition before all those dwelling there, namely that our place and the lands of our alms should not be bound by them but freed, yet seeking in the opportunity of usefulness the salvation of your souls and the care of regular discipline. And as I perceived in a true vision, I said to the father, that is, to the abbot of that place: "The serene light says: You be the father of the purpose and salvation of the souls of my mystical plantation of daughters. Their alms do not belong to you or your brothers, but let your place be their refuge. But if you persist in contrary words, you will be like Amalek and Antiochus, of whom it is written that they despoiled the temple of the Lord. But if any among you in their malice say, 'We want to diminish their allods,' then I say that you are the worst robbers. But if you try to withdraw from them the pastor of spiritual medicine, then again I say that you are like the sons of Belial, and in this you do not regard the justice of God. Hence, the justice of God will destroy you."

And when I, a poor form, asked for the aforesaid liberty of the place and the allods of my daughters from the aforementioned abbot and his brothers, they all granted it to me with the permission of the codex. All, both great and small, seeing, hearing, and perceiving these things, had great goodwill towards them, so that they were even confirmed in writing by the command of God. Whence, let the faithful learn, affirm, complete, and defend these things, so that they may receive that blessing which God gave to Jacob and Israel. But oh, how great will be the lament of my daughters after the death of their mother, for they will no longer suckle at the breasts of the same mother, and thus in groaning and mourning for many times they will say with tears: "Alas, alas, we would gladly suckle at the breasts of our mother if we had her present with us now." Therefore, O daughters of God, I admonish you to have charity among yourselves as I, your mother, have admonished you from my youth, so that you may be the brightest light with angels for your goodwill and very strong in your virtues as your blessed father taught you. May the Holy Spirit give you his gifts because after my end, you will no longer hear my voice, but let my voice never be forgotten among you, which frequently resounded among you in charity.

My daughters now shine in their hearts from the sadness they have about their mother, longing and sighing for heavenly things. Afterwards, they will shine in the brightest and glittering light by the grace of God and will become very strong soldiers in his house. Therefore, if anyone in this crowd of my daughters wishes to create discord and dissension of this habitation and spiritual discipline, may the gift of the Holy Spirit turn this away from his heart. But if, despising God, he still does this, may the hand of the Lord strike him down before all people, for he is worthy to be confounded. Therefore, O daughters, inhabit this place which you have chosen to serve God with all devotion and stability, so that you may obtain heavenly rewards in it. Hence, charity in wisdom says: "I have been

ordained from ancient times and was in the formation of the first man when he was molded by God because God wisely created heaven and earth and other creatures for man so that he might be sustained and nourished by them." Hence, wisdom can rightly be called the artisan, for it encompassed heaven and earth and weighed them with equal balance.

The flesh of man, with the soul, is fully infused in veins and marrow so that the flesh may always be enlivened by the soul, and because man also knows creatures through the soul, he has them in joy and happiness. Thus indeed, man in flesh and soul is lovable as from mercy and charity, just as wisdom and charity are one. Through these two virtues, namely wisdom and charity, angels and men will obey God in humility, for humility frequently inclines itself to the honor of God and thus gathers all virtues to itself. Therefore, in these virtues, God molded man so that he might not entirely perish, just as all angels did not perish because many stood firm with God, while others fell with the ancient serpent. For God created man in wisdom, vivified him in charity, and guided him in humility and obedience so that he might understand how he ought to live.

But the first angel refused to understand these things nor did he consent to God, but wanted to be by himself what he could not be, since there is one life from itself from which all living things derive. Therefore, he fell from life and withered, just as sometimes happens in creatures, namely in trees, in herbs, and in other creatures when some of them fall and wither because they have not tasted the sap. Indeed, the angel is vital from God. However, man is the full work of God since God is the full work of God, because God always works in him which man can understand in himself! Because as long as he lives in this life, he does not cease to think and act in some part. But when he finishes this life, he lives infinitely in another life. For when man performs good works, he becomes like the good angels. But when he does not recognize the great honor of how God

formed him, and when he flees from right obedience and does not work in humility but wants to be by himself, he becomes like the worst angels, falls from life like Satan, and withers.

But you, O man, want to hold God accountable for these faults. Therefore, it is answered to you: Did you create yourself? No. Then it is more fitting that you serve yourself rather than Him who created you? And what reward can you prepare for yourself, since you did not make yourself? None! But the penalty of fire. Thus, in these two parts, angels and men and the other creatures of God are divided, just as it happened there when God marked man with circumcision! Because the first deceiver deceitfully deluded the first man, so that being disobedient to God, he consented to his words and acted according to the advice he had given him. But this same disobedience was cut off in the commandment of God through circumcision when Abraham was willing to obey God! Doing as he commanded him. Then the same deceiver grumbled in himself with deceit, instilling this evil in some men, that it would be impossible for them to confess that God whom they could neither see, hear, nor touch. And thus he raged among the people who were marked by obedience! And he remembered that he had deceived the first man when he said, "You will be like gods knowing good and evil," and he breathed into them the worst, saying that they could in no way know God except in some form, since man is a form, and if God had created man, why would he hide himself so that man could neither see, hear, nor comprehend him.

But the whole Old Law and the truly marked people could not oppress this ancient deceiver and these erring men, nor can they yet. But God will oppress them before the last day and will conquer them before all the people. In this way, the Old Law, with all those, namely those who observed circumcision and also with those who were in the aforesaid error, ran up to the birth of Christ, where the true sun of justice appeared in truth. And this same sun gave a great

splendor through his teaching, seen and heard in his humanity. For the prophets had preceded him, just as some planets are above the sun, which God foresaw when he established the firmament with all its ornaments. God joined water to the sun, moon, and stars and placed clouds with storms that lightning pierces and sometimes are torn apart by the sound of thunder, so that they are moved.

Just as God constituted this creature for the service of man, so also he foreshadowed his Son through it, whom the prophets predicted, and whose humanity they touched with the service of prophecy, just as the planets sustain the sun by serving it. For the prophecy which said, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive," touched his humanity, because the integrity of the virgin conceived from the heat of the Holy Spirit and not from the heat of the flesh, just as the sun so penetrates a thing with its rays that the whole becomes hot from its ardor, yet is not consumed. For the sun of justice proceeded from the undefiled virgin and illuminated the whole world, just as the sun illuminates the whole world through the firmament, which yet remains intact. Thus, the virgin bore a son whose name is Emmanuel, because she conceived him in integrity, and he also proceeded from her in the same integrity as the sun shines through the firmament, with neither divided! And therefore, God is with us, because in that incarnation which arose from the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit in the womb of the virgin, the holy divinity was wholly intact, just as the sun in the firmament.

And the power of the divinity transcended the heavens, the abysses, and all creatures, and yet the Son of God was then with us through his holy humanity. But now, through the offering of his body and through his teaching, he is and will be with us until we see him manifestly.

Likewise, to the same sun of justice, along with the moon and the stars, there is water, so that he might send his disciples into the

whole world to preach the gospel to every creature. For what the prophets had foretold about him, he fulfilled in himself, just as on the seventh day of creation, God rested from all his work. And as God then subjected all creation to serve man, so now the Son of God, after his ascension, committed the works of his incarnation to his disciples, when by his command they preached the gospel to every creature. For they showed men the true faith about the Son of God, just as they had seen and known his miracles while remaining with him, just as the sun shines in the firmament.

When this faith was received by an innumerable crowd of people, the church was established, just as the moon and stars were set in the firmament. And those same people, inspired by the Holy Spirit, appointed various teachers and prelates among themselves, just as the firmament is illuminated by the sun, moon, and stars, who would sustain the whole church. Then, thunder and lightning were raised by unfaithful men and cruel tyrants, who attacked the faithful of the Lord, who burned in faith just as the sun shines in its strength, like wolves and shed their blood, so much so that there was no one to bury them.

Thunder, too, which sounded at the first fall of Satan when he was plunged into hell, rose through the enemies of God who did not cease to sin in sins, and lightning appeared in many Christians who divided their faith in infidelity and burned many Catholics, as was done by Arius, whom Athanasius completely trampled on, strengthened by John the Evangelist, who drew from the bosom of Jesus what he soared in the mystical breath of divinity when he issued the gospel, just as Athanasius later wrote in defending the unity of the divinity of the church. "Whosoever wills," meaning that every man who wishes to be saved should hold the integral and inviolate faith, perfectly believing in God, lest he be plunged into hell and become hellish.

But true faith is that one God in the Trinity of persons, and the same Trinity in one God is gloriously to be honored without any confusion of division or unity, because one God in one substance of divinity is inseparably. For the Father is not one thing in substance, nor the Son another, nor the Holy Spirit another, nor are they separated from each other in the substance of divinity, but in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, there is one divinity of one substance in the glory of majesty.

However, the person of the Father is different, which is neither the Son's nor the Holy Spirit's, the Son's is different, which is neither the Father's nor the Holy Spirit's, and the Holy Spirit's is different, which is neither the Father's nor the Son's, and the divinity of these persons is inseparable, equal in honor and stable, coeternal in power and invincible. For as the Father is in divinity and not in person, so is the Son in divinity and not in person, and so is the Holy Spirit in divinity and not in person, for one is the Father, another is the Son, and another is the Holy Spirit in the distinction of persons, yet not another thing is the Father, another the Son, another the Holy Spirit in the substance of divinity.

And how are these persons to be understood? God indeed is rational in His Word and lives. And God created the world, namely man, with all his glory, which he always held should be. This God alone did! Without whom there is nothing. And who could make Him who is not existent? No one at all. God made all things in His Word, as John, who reclined on the breast of Christ, affirms. But God is fire, and in this fire a flame lies hidden, and this flame is moving in life. In this fire, however, there is no division except the distinction of persons. The material and visible fire is of golden color, and in this fire the flame flashes which burns in a strong wind. Indeed, this fire would not flash unless it were fiery, and it would not be mobile unless by the wind! Hence, there are three names in this fire. For the flame is from the fire, and the fire flashes from the flame! and it is

not mobile except by a strong wind. The fire also burns with the flame, and this burning equally pervades and inflates the fire and the flame! And if there were no burning in the fire, there would be no fire! nor would the flame have thunder.

And the soul is fire, and its fire pervades the whole body in which it is, namely the veins with blood, the bones with marrow, and the flesh with its color, and it is inextinguishable. And the fire of the soul has burning in rationality! by which it sounds the word. But if the soul were not fiery, it would not burn the cold coagulation, nor would it build the body in the blood-filled veins. And because the soul is airy in rationality, it rightly divides its warmth through all parts of the body, lest it burns the body. But when the soul withdraws from the body, the body fails, just as wood does not burn when it lacks the fire's burning. Man, indeed, according to God is rational, and man's rationality sounds with fire in the wind. For rationality is a great force, fiery and undivided! and if it were not fiery, it would not be airy! and if it were not airy, it would not sound.

God, therefore, created all things, and besides Him alone no one has ever made anything vital! although man fashions things by his art, yet he does not make them live. For man has a beginning. And He who created all things was not created, for there was no beginning before Him, but He is without beginning, and all things are in Him, for by Him all things were made. Through those things which man flees out of fear, lest they harm him, he has confidence in God, crying out that He may help him and preserve him in the rest of peace. But through those things which are for man and exist in him, and with which he works, and which are pleasant and convenient for him, he learns to have charity towards God. For if man knew nothing except what was smooth and sweet for him, he would not know what the same was and what it was called. Thus, from the weight and hardness of harmful things, he has the highest knowledge, and he knows what is good and evil, and he knows how

to name them as Adam did. For if he only knew one thing in matters, the work of God would not be perfect in him, and he would not recognize what he saw, nor could he know what he heard, what and what kind it was! therefore, he would be empty and extinct, like that which is burned to charcoal in the fire.

So, as was said before, the Father is uncreated, the Son is also uncreated, and so is the Holy Spirit uncreated, for these three persons are one God, and all creatures were created by the same God, but without Him, nothing was made. The beginning that was made at the beginning of creation wanted to have the likeness of Him who is without beginning, which by no means should have been, because it was nothingness. For in God is life and truth! but in the fallen angel and in man, there is vanity! which pride inflated and passed through like wind. And what was made by God and in God has life in Him, and God crushed the head of him who first seized the aforesaid evils and cast him, who is without life, into hell.

The Father is also immense! for He cannot be comprehended by any capacity nor be limited by any number, as those things can be that were made in the beginning. For God had all things in His foreknowledge, but He did not create them all at once. Hence, there is also an interval in creatures, as in man, who becomes an infant, a boy, a youth, an old man, and decrepit, which indeed can be comprehended. But it is also to be understood in the Son and the Holy Spirit that they are immense, neither to be comprehended by capacity nor by number. The Father is also eternal, in that eternity which never began! and in the likeness of a circling wheel in which neither beginning nor end is seen.

For God is spirit. Indeed, every spirit is incomprehensible and indivisible. Eternity, which is said to have been and is, remains eternal without any change! Nor in it is anyone like God. For eternity is unique, and all its creatures were made through it. And the

Son, coeternal with the Father in divinity, took on the garment of creation, which is man. This garment the divinity thus revealed, just as a ray of the sun is fixed in the sun. The sun emits its light to the earth, yet it is neither increased nor diminished because of this. Likewise, the Son of God, coming into the world, was neither increased nor diminished in divinity, for He put on His garment in this way, just as God clothed Adam with a fragile creation so that he would not appear naked.

Man indeed could in no way see eternity except in humanity, because divinity was hidden in humanity, so that through the garment of humanity the Son was known, just as a man dressed in armor is known, even though he is not seen hiding within it. But the Holy Spirit is also eternal, coeternal with the Father and the Son, who was present at the beginning of all creation and made it movable by inspiring it. And there are not three eternities in God, but one eternity is in Him, and not three, as Arius made them into particles, just as the limbs of a man are cut off in dissection. But eternity is one divinity, which the rationality of man cannot name with one name because of its most powerful works. And since man, having a beginning, turns into dust, he also cannot recount these things that are before the beginning and after the end, but holding one faith in his soul, he speaks of the substance of God, which is spiritual.

For the soul is a breath from God, whence it also comprehends many invisible things and feels the unity of divinity in right faith. For there are not three uncreated gods, nor three immense gods, but one God, namely uncreated and immense, not divided into three modes nor into three parts. The Father is also omnipotent, who through His Word, which is His omnipotent Son, created all things, which the omnipotent Holy Spirit, who is life, thus pervades, just as the heat of fire and flame burns. Yet there are not three omnipotents, but one God in three persons is omnipotent. And it would be improper for

man, who is one man with a rational soul, to be divided into three, because then there would not be an integral life but a mortal corpse. How could a single life, in which there is no mortality of beginning and change, be divided?

God is the Father who is powerful, God is the Son who is the power of the Father, God is the Holy Spirit who is life through whom all life proceeds. Yet there are not three gods, but without any division, there is one deity, whose most powerful force is named by individual names. Thus, in ruling, He is the Lord Father; in working, He is the Lord Son; in giving life, He is the Lord Holy Spirit. And these are the integral divinity of the three names, just as God designated all His work in one force of divinity. Nor are there three lords individually ruling, but with complete integrity, one divinity in three powers of the three persons is, namely, ruling, working, and giving life to all creatures and moving them to their duties. And thus, there is one Lord.

And this Lord made two works: namely, the angel and man, with all creation. The angel, however, is spirit; man, indeed, is made in the image and likeness of God so that he operates with the five senses of his body, through which he is not divided but is wise and knowing and understanding to accomplish his works. God marked these three powers in man, because the soul of man is rational, which moves the body to work, and in which the five senses of the body of man are fully perfected. For by sight man recognizes creatures, by hearing rationality tells him what he hears, by smell he discerns what is suitable or unsuitable for use, by taste he knows what and how he is nourished, and by touch, he performs good and evil works and governs all his works with the aforesaid five senses.

These five senses in man are so united that one cannot lack the other and are in one man, who is not divided into two or three men but perfects all his works with these five senses and is one man. And

because man is wise, knowing, and understanding, he recognizes creatures and through creatures and his great works, which he can scarcely comprehend with his five senses, he knows God, whom he cannot see except in faith. Man, therefore, comprehends and knows all things in creatures through his five senses, because by sight he loves what he tastes, by hearing he discerns, by smelling he chooses what is suitable for him, and by touch, he does what pleases him, and in this, he imitates God who created all creatures.

Thus, also a man, because he is wise, knows what is pleasant or harmful to him. And because he is knowledgeable, he commands and compels creation so that it may be subject to him in service. And he attracts to himself what he desires and drives away what he does not desire. And because he is intelligent, he knows what is appropriate for each creature in its function. For with these three strengths and their appendages, man is rational in the soul, which is in no way divided. Likewise, if by the persuasion of the devil a member of a man is cut off, the rational soul is not divided because of this. The body, however, is the structure of the soul, which operates with it according to its sensitivity, just as a mill is turned by water.

Therefore, all peoples anointed with chrism are compelled in the right faith and confess that there is no division in unity, but that the three persons are one true and firm divinity. And since there are not three souls in one rational soul, which has three strengths, but there is one soul, why would there be any separable division in the unity of the divinity, since all things were created by God? Therefore, it should not be said that there are three gods or three lords, but one God is said to have created all things and one Lord whom all creatures call upon and to whom all belong. And therefore it must be prohibited that any singularity be considered divided in the unity of divinity because there is one God. And the Father was made by no

one because no one appeared before him from whom he could be begotten or created, but he is eternal without beginning.

The Son, however, is from the Father alone without any separation, not made initially, nor created in parts, but begotten, like light in the sun without any separation. He assumed flesh from the Virgin Mary, yet the brightness of divinity did not depart from him because he was eternally in divinity with the Father, although under time he put on his garment, namely the flesh, from the Virgin Mother. But the Holy Spirit is life which moves all breaths in creatures. And he was made life by no breath, nor created by anyone, nor begotten by any other, but exists coeternally and coequally with the Father and the Son in divinity. For he was present at the first creation of the world because the Spirit of God was moving over the waters, illuminating the circle of the whole world, when the Word of God said, "Let it be."

And the Holy Spirit, proceeding in the truth of prophecy from the Father and the Son, made the prophets prophesy, who, however, often concealed the profundity of the prophecy, although they wrote the text, for sometimes they spoke through signification in the shadow and vision of the night. Also, coming upon the apostles in fiery tongues, he filled them completely and made them other men than they were before, so that they saw those same tongues and felt the touch of the Holy Spirit, who had not appeared to any men in such a way before the birth of Christ and would not appear so afterward, because Christ is the only begotten of God.

And the reason he appeared to them in fiery tongues is that the Virgin Mary conceived the Son of God in fiery heat! And so he also proceeds from the Father and the Son. And because the apostles saw him in fire, they spoke openly with wisdom and understanding. And because the Son of God was conceived by the Holy Spirit in the Virgin Mary, the Holy Spirit remained and remains in him and is

always with him, never separating from each other. Therefore, it is an integral and pure faith that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son as was previously said. This indeed the Son said, "Who proceeds from the Father," he said this to honor the Father, considering that his incarnation was in time, while the paternity of divinity is without time.

Therefore, there is one Father and not three fathers, but one who is powerful, for if He were not powerful, He would not have begotten the Son. And if the Son had not been begotten, the world would not have been created. Likewise, there is one Son and not three sons, but one through whom all things were made, consubstantial with the Father. And there is one Holy Spirit and not three Holy Spirits, but one who gives life to all and moves all things. For each root has greenness in itself, from which fruit proceeds. This, however, is observed unequally and yet they are one. Why then would the creator of all not be in the Trinity of persons? The person of the Father is understood through the root, the person of the Son through the fruit, and the person of the Holy Spirit through the greenness, and they are not separated from each other, but are one God.

And in this unity of the Trinity, nothing precedes, nothing follows, nothing is greater in magnificence, nothing is lesser in power, but the persons of this whole Trinity without any emptiness are united in one and exist coeternally and coequally to themselves in eternity and equality. Thus, in these same persons there is nothing about which it can be said according to divinity: it is and was not, great and small, because God, without beginning and end, receives no increase or decrease, because He is immutable. But the work of God in the creature, not formed before, now appears formed and passes through time, expanding itself into greater and contracting into lesser.

Therefore, three persons in unity, and one God in three persons, is to be worshiped, for He created all things and is the life through which

all vital things proceed, which any faithful person should undoubtedly accept. It is also necessary for the faithful not to separate themselves from the Catholic faith but to believe that the incarnation of the Son of God is true and to consider how they themselves were created and how the body, working with the rational soul, is one. For God foreknew before time the form of man in which He would assume flesh. And whoever doubts this denies himself and does not believe that in the two natures of soul and body, man is one through three modes. For if one of these three—namely, the soul, body, or rationality, from which man consists—were lacking, man would not exist. For rational man is in the soul, which perfects any work in the body with the sound of words, for creatures are present to man just as branches are to a tree. Because man was not created without the rest of creation, just as a tree was not created without branches.

Therefore, true faith is that Christ, the Son of God, born before time, is God, and also through the garment of flesh is true man. Thus, He is God from the substance of the Father, since He is coeternal and coequal with Him without time, begotten before the ages, because all things were made through Him. But through the humanity that has time, He is man from the substance of the Mother. He is indeed fully God in the integrity of eternity and fully man with a rational soul and pure flesh without any male mixture of human nature. And He is coequal with the Father in the eternity of divinity, but lesser in the humanity that has time. And He, being God and man, is not divided into two, but is one Christ, not by the conversion of divinity into flesh, but by the assumption of flesh which divinity has joined to itself and which He has so suffused with His clarity as a ray of the sun shines in the sun. Nor by this has any confusion occurred between the substance of divinity and the substance of flesh, but in the true unity of person, Christ is one true Son of God.

Just as in the rational soul, there is no change through the flesh of man, for it is the rational spirit from God that pervades the whole body of man and moves all the works of the acting man. And just as thus the soul and flesh make one man, so also, without any doubt, the Son of God, born before the ages, fully clothed in flesh assumed from the Virgin as foretold, being both God and man, is one Christ. Indeed, through the anointing of God's grace, He is called Christ. He, in His holy humanity, was wounded by the piercing of nails and a lance because of the wound of the first man, which he inflicted upon all his kind, so that He might heal it by the bruising of His own blood and anoint it with the oil of grace and bind it through repentance when man grieved for having sinned. Wounded, He descended spiritually into the pit of infernal depth and there attracted many to Himself, namely He took away the first man from hell and all who had ever touched God in the manners of human honor, and He placed them in a place of delights and joys which they had lost in the first parent.

But on the third day, He rose from the death of the sleeping body. In this, He signified the three persons of the divinity. And ascending to the heavens with the same body, He went and there sits ruling at the right hand of the Father, which is the salvation of the believing people, granting life to those whom He redeemed with His blood. And all these were foreknown before the times of all beginnings, since the Word of the Father, by which all things were made, took on flesh to redeem the man whom He had formed. The same Son of God will come at the end of the age as the just judge to judge the living and the dead: the living, namely those who are found working the work of faith in the same good work, and the dead, those who have worked the works of death through unbelief. At the voice of the calling trumpet, man will be subject to the judgment of the Son of God as a footstool, for then seeing Him, he will recognize Him who is worthy.

For at the coming of this judge, through the aforementioned call, the dead will rise with their bodies, just as through the sound of God's word all creation proceeded, and all will answer to their judge concerning their own works which they did in their mortal body, and no one will be able to excuse himself, for everyone will see his own works, which he previously knew he had done, then recognizing them openly, for they are in him as if in a garment. Therefore, those who have done just and righteous works will go into a greater brightness of life than the sun shines in this world, their souls illuminated by the grace of God. Hence, the angels praise God because these have performed such great works that they are gloriously surrounded by them, like a man is clothed in a precious garment.

Furthermore, an innumerable multitude of those people who, before their end or even at their end, performed perfect penance and confessed their sins to God, the Son of Man will lift up to Himself in His blood, and He will reward each according to his works in life. But the wicked, having no excuse for their unjust works and not knowing what they might say, and those who worshiped idols through the devil's arts and performed countless evil deeds with the devilish crowd, will be clothed in the confusion of their works and descend into the pit of hell with the devil, who desired to occupy it to be like God.

In truth, it must be faithfully and confidently believed that the one divinity in three persons and three persons in one divinity are the one life of eternity, and whoever does not believe thus will be eradicated from the day of salvation. It ends. But you, oh masters and teachers of the people, why are you blind and mute in the inner knowledge of the letters that God has set before you, just as He instituted the sun, moon, and stars so that rational man might know and discern the times of the seasons through them? The knowledge of the Scriptures has been set before you so that in it, as in a solar

ray, you might recognize each peril and, through your teaching, shine in the darkness of the night of unbelieving men, like the moon, who are like the Sadducees and heretics and many others erring in faith who are included among you and whom many of you know, being like cattle and beasts, for they neither see nor wish to know that they are rational through the breath of life, nor do they lift their heads to Him who created them and who governs them through the five senses He has given them.

Why then is there in the rational man the likeness of a prone animal, which is awakened by the breath of air, which it exhales again and thus is ended, and which has no other knowledge than what it senses and fears the striking? And which does nothing by itself unless it is impelled to do so? And how is it fitting that man should be in the society of the beast which is subject to him by ministering to him, and through which he is nourished, and over which he commands and rules because it is not rational? Hence, the supreme Father speaks to the Son, as it is written by the Holy Spirit: "Rule them with an iron rod! Like a potter's vessel, you will break them." What does it mean? Those who resist you, you will rule with an iron rod, which is harsh in chastising, and like a potter's vessel, which is made of clay, you will break them, for they too are from the earth. For they do not enter through the door of righteousness by faith, nor do they go out by the fame of good works, for they are thieves, and through the property of their own will, they slay and destroy what they want, for they are hypocrites, overturning the law to their own perdition.

But you, who in the magisterial doctrine are like the moon and stars to those who listen, who, however, more for honor and worldly riches than for God, chew over the scriptures, listen and understand that it would be much more necessary that you cut through the nocturnal darkness of erring and unbelieving men, who do not know in which way they walk, so that you might draw them to yourselves

through faith. Now, therefore, guide them through true admonition, showing them that in the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth and the remaining creatures for man, and placed man in the delightful place of paradise, giving him the command which he transgressed, for which reason he was expelled into the darkness of this exile. In that very transgression, it was shown how great a sin it was that man obeyed not the Creator, but him who seduced him, for it is more just to obey the Lord than a deceitful servant who likened himself to his Lord.

With these words, fill their hearts with an iron rod, so that they may recognize not to turn away from their Creator, or if through unbelief they have deviated from Him, that they may fall into the pit of hell with the one whom they have imitated. For those who persist in unbelief will be broken like a potter's vessel, which seems unworthy and unsuitable to the potter, and because they did not perform works of faith, they will not be able to enter into eternal life, just as a broken potter's vessel is not repaired but shattered. Understand this, you who govern the people, and look to the invisible God whom no one can resist nor see with carnal eyes, and consider how you govern your stewardship which you have received from Him, for in His name you have been glorified with great honor, and thus govern the people so that you may not be ashamed of your governance before Him on the day of judgment.

Beware also lest through the pleasure of the flesh and the delights of the world, you become so weary that you can scarcely open one eye to heavenly doctrine. These things are harsh for you because he who diligently attends to heavenly matters wounds his whole body in what he governs, for he withdraws the desires of the flesh from himself. Therefore, for the fear of God, who is life and truth, do not despise the man writing these things in female form, who is unlearned in the doctrine of letters and who, from her infancy up to the seventieth year of her age, was weak, and who did not see or

hear this scripture with the eyes and ears of the outer man, but who only saw and heard it in the inner knowledge of her soul. Do not, therefore, lift up your minds in pride, despising her, for God made an irrational animal speak as He willed.

This vision, however, in which I, a poor little form, saw these things, has not departed from my soul from my infancy up to the aforementioned age, and I wrote these things in this place which had been destroyed by some tyrants and remained desolate for many years, in which the relics of the blessed Robert rest, who was noble according to the dignity of this present world, and whom God gloriously called to Himself in the twentieth year of his age. This place, now finally, after those desolate years, has been marvelously restored by the grace of God. For the Lord in this His holy place remembered those words which He spoke to His disciples, saying, "The hairs of your head are all numbered," and did not wish to omit revealing it.

Indeed, the merits of the saints must be written about, so that good and right fame may sound in the ears of the faithful, just as even creation praises God because it was created by Him. For God is eternal, and His work is done to the praise of His name, for if the soul were not in the body of man, man would not live, nor would the soul operate without the flesh. Thus the angel is praise in God, and man is work in God. Therefore, let there be praise to Him in all His wonders and in the merits of the saints who is true eternity, creating all things and renewing heaven and earth on the last day, whose height and depth no other has touched, and whose breadth of knowledge no one can comprehend.

Therefore, this scripture must be heard and understood by the faithful. Oh, how glorious the divinity is, which in creating and operating through its creature reveals itself, just as He did in the three children whom He so infused that without any vision of the

scriptures and without the doctrine of men, they praised Him in the furnace of fire. For just as a happy soul, stripped of flesh, desires nothing else but to taste and know God, so these blessed three children, still living in the flesh, ardently desiring God, imitated the nature of the soul. God the Father also willed that His Son be named through the unbelief of ignorance in Nebuchadnezzar, just as the evil spirits know Him but do not confess Him. To all of these, God often showed His wonders. He also manifested His omnipotence in Samson the strongest, who, overcoming lions and fierce beasts by his strength, was deceived by his wife as Adam was by Eve, but then, regaining his strength, he conquered her and the rest of his enemies, just as Christ, despoiling hell, devastated the power of His enemies.

Moreover, in the very harsh battle of David against Goliath, it was prefigured that through the humanity of His Son, He would bind the ancient serpent. And He sent such great power into the gentle sense of a woman that a woman, killing Holofernes at night, liberated the Israelite people, and in this, He prefigured the mother of His Son, through whom the faithful people would be liberated. In the ancient saints, through the prophecy of the prophets and the burnt offerings of rams and bulls, He made the covenant of the law in a figurative way, because He foretold that the church would be joined to His Son through the bond of marriage. For through the garment of the humanity of the Son of God, the church adheres to the Son of God, who endowed her with an inheritance in His blood, so that she regenerates offspring to life through baptism, which Eve generated to death. For Christ espoused the church to Himself in His blood, as was prefigured by the oath that Abraham's servant swore under his master's thigh, namely that the church was to be espoused to Christ.

But when Lucifer with all his followers sensed that God the Father had openly made a marriage for His Son, he raged within himself, and just as Cain was stirred up to the blood of Abel, so he invaded

the hearts of unbelievers and tyrants to capture, wound, and kill the just, good, and elect of God. Hence Christ spoke to His disciples in the parable of the king who sent his servants to those invited to the wedding, but when they refused to come, he sent other servants to them to come, for his banquet was prepared. When they neglected it, they seized his servants, mistreated them, and killed them, for the ancient saints whom God first sent, and the apostles who were sent later, the Jews and other unbelieving men, often gathering in great joy, destroyed from the earth.

God, however, through the bow placed in the clouds of heaven, was mindful of His oath when He willed that His Son, signified by that very bow, be born from a pure virgin nature, who, mightily fighting against all His enemies, overcame them, just as men were destroyed by the water of the flood, yet the new age of men was recovered through the water of baptism, with Christ reigning in the church, appearing like the bow in the clouds. The church is indeed joined to the Son of God, just as circumcision was to the law, which by serving the law foreshadowed the church. But the new age, adorned with the ornament of the church, will never be entirely derided in failure, just as the bow in the sky will not fail, but will be so compressed with fear that it will scarcely be seen with one eye, and will be restored in the Son of God, just as it will be recovered in the time of the son of perdition.

In the various colors of the aforementioned bow, the virtues of the saints in the thousand-number are signified, in the fiery heat, chastity, and continence, in the purple, the martyrdom of the martyrs, in the hyacinth, the doctrine of the elders, and in the green, the virtues of the good works of the saints are received, which, having breathed forth through the Son of God, radiate as rays proceed from the sun. The aforesaid king, sending his armies, destroyed those murderers and burned their city because when the old and new sorrows, namely, having run their course, had passed

by, the Almighty God, being angry over His enemies, when the Roman princes dug up and completely overturned Jerusalem, which was drenched with the blood of the true lamb and the blood of other saints, destroyed all the legitimate inhabitants who lived there, killing and selling them.

Then the church was rebuilt again, just as the holy city of Jerusalem descends from heaven, prepared by God as a bride adorned for her husband, because the Lamb of God has gathered to Himself men of nursing, childhood, youth, maturity, and old age, with whom He adorned the church in the newness of good works and in the humility of the virtues descending from heaven, just as each of them perfected good and holy works prepared by the Holy Spirit, just as a bride is adorned for her husband when she burns with love for him, as the church is also joined to Christ.

Thus did God also act in His chosen one, the blessed Robert, whom He completely infused in his infancy and whom He led to a good end, who, illustrious by birth and worldly riches, was dear to God through the liberty of divine blessing. The life of Saint Robert, our most beloved patron. For as I see in a true vision, our blessed patron Robert, orphaned by his father, lived with his widowed mother in this place, toiling in good works and serving God in chastity, humility, and sanctity. With transient and temporal things, he purchased eternal rewards. As the living light in a true vision showed and taught me, thus I will speak of him. Wherever there was an opinion of true sanctity, there sanctity could stand and remain for a long time. However, wherever there was no true sanctity, there falsehood could not last long. But in the blessed Robert, there was true sanctity, as the divine majesty openly showed when it transported me and some sisters with me to the place of his relics through a great miracle of great visions! It appears openly to all who see and wish to know.

The father of the mother of blessed Robert was from Lorraine, and he was a prince there and had a vast expanse of estates and riches in the region of his birth and in other surrounding areas, and around the banks of the Rhine in fertile lands. He was considered great and renowned among the princes of the world. Truly a Catholic, he flourished in the times of the great Emperor Charlemagne, and he took as his wife a girl, namely the mother of the blessed Bertha, from distant regions, who was born into great wealth. When he had a daughter, the mother of blessed Robert, he gave her, grown up, to a pagan and tyrant, a noble and duke according to worldly dignity, called Robolad, when pagans and Christians still lived together due to the rudiment of true faith. He solemnly associated the glory of marriage with her and gave her his estates near the Rhine in fertile lands as a dowry so that, because of her noble lineage and the vastness of her estates, the same Robolad might be compelled to the Christian name, which, however, availed nothing. After living with her for some time laudably, seeing her honorable ways, he took it grievously and, joining himself to other women, did not abandon her in the manner of marriage, but, bearing the tyranny of an unbelieving mind, did not love baptism.

Thus this blessed woman was greatly tormented, vowing in her heart to God that if she were freed from him, she would not be joined to the bed of another man. With sighs, tears, prayers, and alms, offering a sacrifice of praise to God, she said, "O, O, when will I be liberated from the occupation of this world, which is a bitter prison to my soul and body?" Let us speak more of the benevolence than of the sanctity of the blessed Bertha so that glory in the highest to God and peace on earth to men of good will may be. For she finally conceived and bore a son, and if it were allowed to say, she wrapped him in swaddling clothes as the blessed Virgin Mary did her son. His father, flourishing in the greatest glory of the world as mentioned, had a very fortified castle on that mount which is called Loven, and

he held a duchy over almost the entire province up to the city of Mainz. When the blessed child Robert was three years old, his father, fighting in great battles against the Christians, was killed and perished before God and men, and blessed Bertha remained a widow. Seeing herself freed from the bond of her husband and the care of the world, she abandoned the aforementioned castle and moved to another place, namely situated on the Naya, where now the relics of herself and blessed Robert rest, and there she built a church. Casting off the preciousness and splendor of her garments, she no longer attended to the dignity of her lineage and riches, but, clad in coarse clothing like a sack and girded with a belt, she served God devoutly in the continence of widowhood as she had long desired.

She also gathered many perfect and some good men around her and remained in the aforementioned place, mortifying herself with vigils and fasts, and daily ministering to God with prayers and alms, she fortified her son in sanctity by good example, fearing that he might be swayed towards worldly pleasures by his relatives and friends. To prevent this, she commended him to God day and night. Yet, many tyrants, both Christians and idol worshipers, harassed her in the meantime, both admiring the elegance of her lineage and body and coveting her riches and estates, desiring to marry her. She repelled all with one mind and one will of her soul and strove to please God alone, laboring to raise her son more for the glory of God than for worldly honor. When she saw the good virtues in him rising with the hope of heavenly life, and perceived his spirit inclined more towards eternal than perishable things, she rejoiced in the many gifts of the Holy Spirit she saw in him. For the blessed Robert, even as an infant and suckling milk, did not exhibit the malicious behaviors of a crying or irritable child. And as he was weaned from milk, in his boyhood, he behaved like a man with the most diligent intention towards God. Therefore, his father hated him, often affirming that he

would become foolish and stupid while he lived. But those who worshiped God with good and right faith, seeing this boy so benevolent in his boyhood, loved him greatly and truly said he would be blessed, though they spoke in ignorance.

The Holy Spirit, who had infused the patriarch Jacob with His grace in his mother's womb, also inspired this infant, for God often performs His miracles even in those who, due to the tenderness of their veins and marrow, do not yet have full knowledge, just as a grain of wheat, which is ground into flour before it can be baked and eaten, is mixed with water. For God, remembering the first creation in Adam, does not disdain to transform the breath of life into coagulation, which is impure because of sins, and although this coagulation is twisted by the spumation of the devil's suggestion and changed from the pure formation of the first man into this impure coagulation of viperous habits, yet God makes it intelligible through the breath of life. Some men born thus, more in malignity than in the sweetness of the flesh, attract what they choose to themselves and flee from good knowledge as if from stench. Others, more in the taste of the flesh than in malignity, love sins. Yet others, fleeing both malignity and pleasure in sins, turn to good knowledge. But those who perfect their malice in malignity are like the devil, who, seeing the brightness of glorious honor, trusted in himself and did not wish to acknowledge God. Therefore, many of them will perish. But those who are more constrained to sins by the taste of the flesh than by malignity are called sinners, of whom God chooses many and establishes them as pillars of heaven when they blush for the excess of their sins by repenting and amending. Those who perceive themselves as intelligible through the breath of life and incline towards good knowledge, fleeing evil, are alienated from the earthly world in mind and are in heaven, associated with the angels.

This coagulation from the earthly body sweats according to the nature of the earth because the earth is of such hardness that it can

produce no fruit without labor. Some earth, however, cultivated with hard labor, produces some fruits scarcely, while some is so soft and moist that it is easily overturned by the plow and brings forth much fruit. Since man understands what is sweet or bitter to him through intellect, if he chooses the work of reformation in good knowledge, the Holy Spirit will grant him greenness to perfect that work. If, however, he grasps death in sins, the first deceiver, who kindled sin at his first origin, breathes death upon him. And just as the Holy Spirit brings the greenness of heavenly desire to those who love Him and converts many sinners by the plow of penance so that they may reach the heavenly kingdom, so too does the evil spirit breathe vicious evils upon those who love him and often leads them to despair so that they are plunged into the Tartarean places.

In all these things, man receives the reward he seeks, so that if he seeks life from God, it will be granted to him. If, however, he looks to deadly things, he receives death through the breath of the devil. For man has sensuality and intellect in all his works and can dig the earth and sow seed upon it, which would lie dead in the earth without fruit if God did not vivify it. In the full blessing of the fruitful earth, namely benevolence, God loved Jacob before he was born and visited the blessed child Robert in his infancy with the same inspiration. For God foresaw that the sensitive earth of this blessed boy would desire to yearn for God, and as he was still sucking milk, he began to exhibit these behaviors. All who saw him loved him greatly because wherever benevolence is in a man, the desires of men are kindled to love him, just as dew falls upon a grain to bring it to greenness. Therefore, when this boy was seven years old, he desired to learn letters, and his mother had him instructed in them, yet she did not want him to be a cleric but intended for him to be a duke of his province and a defender of the churches in place of his father.

He, however, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, was merciful to the poor, which is the ministry and support of benevolence, as the bowels serve man by containing him. And in the manner of boys, wherever he found poor children, he brought them to his mother, saying, "Mother, behold your sons." She kindly receiving this, responded to him, "My son, they are your brothers." As he was properly and honorably nourished, advancing in age and wisdom before God and men, he was raised in holy manners and virtues to youthful age, anointed with the oil of sanctity like David with the oil of gladness above his fellows, and he utterly despised the glory of the whole world with all the effort of his mind, even though he seemed to possess it bodily before men. For he lived a holy life in good manners and frequently attended church with pious prayers, and he committed to good memory and pious study what he was taught in sacred writings.

When he reached the age of twelve, his mother said to him, "My son, since we have many estates and riches, let us build an oratory in honor of God and for the salvation of our souls." He responded, "Not so, my mother, but let us first attend to what the gospel says. For Christ says, 'Break your bread for the hungry and bring the needy and wandering into your house. And again, when you see the naked, clothe them and do not despise your own flesh.'"

Hearing this, his mother rejoiced greatly because her son had given her such sound advice. For through the Holy Spirit, good and holy desires like balsam exuded in his mind, and they silently contemplated how these things he had spoken could be done and thus fell asleep. Hence, through the admonition of the Holy Spirit, he saw an old man in a dream who, having a beautiful face, washed some boys in clear water and afterward led them into a garden most pleasant with every kind of flower and tree and full of the scent of all spices, clothing them in the whitest garments. The blessed Robert, captivated by the pleasantness of that place, said to the old

man, "I want to stay here." To which the old man replied, "You will not remain here now because you will prepare a fruitful ladder to heaven where you will be a companion of the angels! Therefore, do not neglect to accomplish what you intended to do for the poor, so that through their nourishment and clothing, you may be fed with the food of life and clothed with the garment with which Adam was stripped through disobedience, becoming a stranger to the world in mind and choosing the best part for yourself."

But when the blessed boy Robert woke up, he told his mother what he had seen in his dreams. She, greatly grieved, knelt before God and prayed, saying: "O Lord my God, You will fulfill my desire in my son". And thereafter, both the mother and her son, building some dwellings near the banks of flowing waters, sheltered the poor and naked there, to whom they also provided food and clothing through two faithful and holy men. One of these was called Wichbert, who served them in the priesthood, and the other, a certain servant of theirs, was unlearned. The blessed Robert himself, despite his tender age and noble status, out of love for Christ, often washed the feet of the poor, set food and drink before them, and frequently made their beds, faithfully serving God until the fifteenth year of his age.

And because he flourished in the pomp of the world with many riches and a large household, in which he saw himself drawn towards the world, he began to consider how blessed Alexis had left his father and mother, home, and worldly riches by going on a pilgrimage, and he decided to imitate him entirely, so that he could serve God more freely in peace. His mother, sensing this in him through certain signs, though he tried to conceal it from her, said to him with tears, "Son! Remember the pain of a mother's womb and heed the sighs of your widowed mother. Look upon your household, which relies solely on you, and foresee that you do not bring intolerable misery upon us. For you can distribute our wealth to the

poor, needy, and all who lack as you please. And what is better and more useful to you than to serve God in this way?"

As his mother spoke these words with many tears and sighs, this blessed young man was greatly troubled in his heart. At the same time, certain nobles, both strangers and relatives, came to him, saying, "You who have such great honor of the dukedom and so many worldly riches, why do you make yourself so contemptible?" And daily, with these and other similar words, they tried to tear him away from his good purpose and right path. Seeing this, he said to his mother, "Behold, through the devil's suggestion, who envies my purpose and life, I shall be entangled in the world, and I shall follow the ways of my father, though unwillingly. For this reason, I desired a pilgrimage, that I might serve God more freely." Hearing this, his mother, who had placed all her hope in God, was anguished and distressed, fearing that her son, attracted by the nobility of his lineage, might become entangled in worldly affairs. Preferring to be without an heir rather than have her son serve the devil through worldly entanglements, she said to him as much as she could from her grief, "Son, since I see you troubled by many counsels and being drawn inconveniently towards the world, do what you will! Undertake the pilgrimage which you have long desired, and may He to whom it was said, 'You alone are a pilgrim in Jerusalem,' be with you on your journey and return you safely to me to the glory of His name."

With his mother's consent, he undertook the pilgrimage and set out for the shrines of the holy apostles Peter and Paul with some of his men. When the people of that region saw him, they were amazed and said to each other, "Truly, this man is noble! For his face, shining with benevolence, appeared bright, for the grace of the Holy Spirit had infused him." And all who looked upon him loved him in the embrace of charity. For just as a star shines bright without a cloud, so benevolence is seen in the face of a man, for such a man is

in good standing with the Holy Spirit. And when blessed Robert commended himself daily to God and the merits of the holy apostles Peter and Paul, he remained there for some time. While he was staying there, some religious men of that region asked him about his way of life or desire, and he revealed to them everything that was in his heart. They advised him to heed this gospel where it is written, "Go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and come, follow me," for a pilgrimage would be good and useful to him, lest the riches of his nobility lead him to perdition.

He followed their advice and decided in his mind to do so. Finally, returning to his estate, which was very extensive, he built villages and churches in places where they were not yet built and distributed them to his men so that they might dwell there and minister to his mother as long as she lived and assist all who came and labored in need. He himself thought of leaving the dukedom, his mother, his household, and his possessions and everything he had, to become a pilgrim for the name of Christ. His estate, inherited by right from his father and mother and other progenitors, extended from the place where his relics are interred, namely where the river Naya flows into the Rhine, upwards along the Rhine's bank to the Selsa river, and then crossing to two other rivers called Wiza and Apfla. It ascended beyond the Naya to a stream called Elra, which is the middle of three rivers of the same name, and from there it stretched to the Simer river, and from there through the forest to the San river, where the stream called Heienbach flows into the Rhine.

At that time, both the blessed Robert and his mother's dwelling was in that place because of the pleasantness of the flowing waters where their relics now rest. Their city was situated there, fortified with strong buildings and extending across the adjacent plain to the root of the neighboring mountain and to the Rhine's bank. On the other side of the Naya river, there was a village where the dwellings of their servants and fishermen, and the stables of their horses and

barns where their grain was stored, and the wine presses where their wine was pressed, were located. In those places, there was greater prosperity and abundance of riches and all worldly dignities at that time than in other cities of that region because the influx and transit of many people from various provinces were frequently encountered there.

Finally, when blessed Robert reached youthful age, that is, when he was nearly twenty years old, many of his relatives and servants, though he resisted, drew him towards worldly pleasures, but he, burning wholly with the love of God, repelled them with pious and suitable words. For God, who knows all things, both future, past, and present, foresaw something different for him. For as this blessed one, like a tree full of fruit, was of such noble and elegant nature that his mind could easily be turned away from the generosity and riches of the world into the opposition of good things and wither in sanctity, as often happens with some men who begin good works but later wither, God took him to Himself.

For some, always feasting with sinners, sometimes promise God according to their will that they will someday repent of their sins, and in this, the devil often deceives them so that afterward they sin more in lasciviousness than if they had not had that vow in their mind, because they set a time for sinning and a time for leaving sins. These men arrange the time to cease sinning in their habits and meanwhile commit graver sins than they had before and thus possess the pleasure of their will for God, and in this sweetness, they are deceived by the devil, who instills in them to do all they desire according to their will, for they will possess it for a short time. The Spirit of God foresaw these where it was said that all the gods of the nations are demons because just as the nations call the form they make with their hands their god, so these men make their will their god when they propose to themselves that they can do what they will, just as the ancient serpent said, "On whatever day you eat, you

will be like gods," for he reckoned within himself that man could accomplish whatever he desired through the taste of the flesh.

Thus, when he looked upon his glorious honor, he thought within himself that he could accomplish what he willed, and because God crushed the perversity of his will, therefore, he hates God and all His works and gifts. In this hatred, he is utterly blinded so that he cannot truly know that he cannot harm man any more than God permits. In this same blindness, he does not fully understand the miracles of the humanity of the Son of God but holds them in doubt because God, who cast him into hell, does not want him to know them.

All the pleasures of man's flesh and the most malicious wickedness of the devil will be turned into dispersal, like straw before the face of the wind, because just as the heat of the wind dries up and scatters the lightest things among creatures, so too does the sight of God reduce all evils to nothing. And men, when inflamed by the devil's wickedness towards the pleasure of the flesh, almost create a face for themselves, about which it is said, "Fill their faces with shame!" because with the fullness of filth, their wills are satiated, in which they are also disgracefully exposed! For when they perform in themselves what they choose in the pleasure of the flesh, they are contaminated by the shame of the fallen Satan. And because they want to operate in the pleasure of their flesh without fear, as if they were gods, they will be disgracefully dispersed in the opinion of the evils in which they strive to stand. Therefore, whatever man does without God is counted for nothing, and each one will receive his own reward according to his labor from Him who created him.

However, in His beloved Robert, God did not find straw blown by the wind! For whatever this holy one received from the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he swiftly completed with the help of the same Spirit, because he did not set for himself times of ownership. Finally, the mother of this blessed young man, Robert, while devoutly

serving God in the continence of widowhood with good and holy works, saw in a divine revelation a dream in which a rib fell from her side. Terrified by this, she emitted frequent groans and sighs from her heart! As it became clear shortly thereafter, her son, blessed Robert, with the intention of fulfilling his vow of devotion to God, began to suffer from a great fever. In this illness, the old man whom he had previously seen in a dream appeared to him, saying, "I am the Ancient of Days, who appeared to Daniel in a night vision, and now I reveal myself to you as well. I call you to the glory of infinite blessedness, for through the garden that I once showed you in a vision, I truly prefigured the good and holy works that you have now completed."

When he awoke from sleep, terrified by sadness and fear because he gladly would have completed what he had vowed to God in his desires, he told his mother what he had seen. She, struck with great sorrow, wept and lamented greatly upon hearing this, as anyone who has experienced something similar can understand. Thus, when this blessed one had labored for thirty days in the aforementioned illness, God took him from this life in the twentieth year of his age, in good confession and in the fear of God, so that he might not, if he reached full age, follow the ways of his father. For God, who knows all things, foresaw that this was expedient for him. God indeed anticipated him and took him, shining in innocence, from this life. He was buried with a great gathering of the people from the whole region in the oratory that he and his mother had built over the river Naya on the aforementioned estate. Some wept over him because he was taken from this life prematurely, while others rejoiced over him because through the miracles that God performed there through him, the whole region was illuminated as if by the sun.

For eight years, God performed many signs and miracles through the merits of this beloved one in that place, for the sick, the lame, and the captives, so that whoever was afflicted in tribulations, coming to

his tomb, was freed by the grace of God. Blessed Bertha, the chosen widow of God, after the happy death of her son, lived a holy life in great contrition of her heart. She offered everything she had for the service of God at the tomb of her son and fully provided all necessities to the congregation of brothers who served God there in divine worship. For after the death of her son, she lived in all goodness of fasting, almsgiving, and prayers for nearly twenty-five years, piously and justly completing many labors for the love of God. Then, being seized by bodily infirmity, she returned her spirit, which had always been fixed on heavenly desires, to God and was honorably buried in peace in the tomb of her son on the aforementioned estate.

After her death, the said place stood in honor of sanctity and in the peace of quiet until the tyranny of the Northmen. For some years after the blessed Bertha's happy passing, the Northmen, coming from their borders, devastated many cities around the Rhine by divine judgment, and also destroyed Trier! And so, ravaging, they came to the city of Robolad, the father of blessed Robert, where the river Naya mixes with the Rhine, which was mentioned earlier, and they reduced it to ruin and ashes. After this deed, when these wicked men were finally driven back and had laid down their ferocity, returning to their lands, the inhabitants of the said place who had survived and who had been scattered in various hiding places returned and, seeing their city ruined, built other dwellings for themselves on the other side of the Naya river because of the protection of the flowing waters and adjacent mountains. They transported all that they could carry from the said destroyed place—wood, stones, foundations, and other utensils—to the other bank of the Naya and settled there. Thus, the former place, once flourishing with the crowd of people, the height of buildings, and the amplitude of wealth, was desolated and brought to greater and greater desolation over subsequent times. For all the estates that blessed

Robert had possessed by hereditary right were dissipated among strangers and diverse people in opposition, and nothing remained intact except the church where the said elect of God, as mentioned above, rested with his mother. This church has lasted until our times, so much so that we have seen it with our own eyes when we came to that place by divine direction! Apart from certain few vineyards belonging to the same church, which we acquired for our own price from Lord Hermann, Bishop of Hildesheim, and his brother, the nobleman Bernard.

And because blessed Robert is truly blessed and truly holy, I have heard and learned this in celestial harmony: O golden city of Jerusalem! Adorned with the purple of the King. O edifice of the highest goodness, which is a light never obscured, for you are adorned in the dawn and in the heat of the sun. O blessed boyhood that gleams in the dawn, and O praiseworthy youth that burns in the sun. For you, O noble Robert, shone like a gem in these, hence you cannot be hidden from foolish men, just as a mountain in a valley cannot be concealed. The windows of your Jerusalem are specially adorned with topaz and sapphire. While you shine in these, O Robert, you cannot be hidden by tepid manners, just as a mountain crowned with roses, lilies, and purple in true manifestation cannot be concealed. When these were planted in another vineyard, the Holy Spirit took them and nobly united them with you in His mystery. O tender flower of the field and O sweet greenness of the apple and O burden without marrow, which did not bend hearts into crimes, O noble vessel that was not polluted nor devoured in the dance of the ancient cave and that was not soaked in the wounds of the ancient destroyer.

The Holy Spirit harmonizes in you, for you are associated with angelic choirs. And because you are adorned in the Son of God, having no stain, you are a beautiful vessel, O Robert, who in your boyhood and youth yearned for God in the fear of God and in the

embrace of charity and in the sweetest fragrance of good works. O Jerusalem, your foundation is laid with flowing stones, which is with the publicans and sinners who were lost sheep, but through the Son of God, found, and they ran to you and are set in you. Then your walls flash with living stones who, through the utmost zeal of good will, flew like clouds in the sky. And thus your towers, O Jerusalem, gleam and shine through the redness and whiteness of the saints and through all the ornaments of God, which do not fail you, O Jerusalem. Therefore, you who are adorned and crowned, who dwell in Jerusalem, and you, O Robert, who are their companion in this dwelling, help us who serve you and labor in exile.

O happy vision, when the flame of life shone in the friend of God, Robert, so that the love of God flowed in his heart, embracing the fear of the Lord, from which also his recognition flourished among the heavenly citizens. O most blessed Robert, who in the flower of your age did not bring forth nor bear the vices of the devil, hence you left the shipwrecked world; now intercede for those who serve you in God. And again, I heard a voice from heaven, saying thus in another manner. The first sound remained as it came from God until He restored the human race in the womb of the Virgin. And the same sound was life, so that it did not pass like the wind passes. It also sounded in such a great voice that it touched the abyss, just as on the last day it will raise up the entire human race with the same power as it came forth on the first day. This is the word that John testifies to, through which all things were made in their forms. Then God made man in His image and likeness. And indeed, the birds, animals, beasts, and fishes are subject to man. For angels and the spirits of the blessed are also before God. But in this, that the word came forth from God, God the Father named His Son, and the word begotten from God was life. And the word through which all things were made became incarnate in the world. Thus God willed to join Himself to man because He made man similar to Himself.

Therefore, the living one says that in the first age He did what pleased Him. Afterwards, when it came to the middle, ruin appeared. What follows thereafter is hidden. Woe, woe, O man of battle, arise, investigate each case in your just judgments, so that they may be without ruin. O word of the Father, you are the light of the first dawn in the circle of the wheel, operating all things in divine power. O you who are the prescience of God, you foresaw all your works as you willed, so that in the midst of your power it lay hidden, because you foresaw and operated all things like the wheel encompassing everything, which did not accept the enemy, nor was it prostrated in the end. When the deceiver devil deceived the man whom God had formed, there was a power in God that pleased Him, which the ancient serpent did not recognize nor taste in all his scrutiny, which is the beautiful form of the Son of God who overcame the devil in the abyss and drew the breath of man to Himself and split the belly of the devil so that through His own wounds, He might free the man who had passed through his bowels, and take him from the confines of hell and adorn him again with the wings of a white cloud.

Therefore, O man, rejoice, for God made you such that you are the banner of the holy militia of the divinity and accomplished victory through you when He broke the confines of hell. But also in your formation, in the midst of the side of the earth's orb, it flowed, so that all the angelic militia saw you and were greatly amazed, and thus marked you with celestial symphony in angelic victory, where you will perfect the forms of virtues in your struggles. Therefore rejoice, O man, and do not let yourself be seduced into mockery by ignorance, as if you were not in your great honors, because God made you such that He fully operated all His miracles in you.

For when the mist of death was attracted in the female form, so that Eve in sorrow brought forth all the sons of men in herself from joy, where she went into exile, because the serpent had deceived her and she received evil from him, then through another female form she

was drawn away. For God in the ancient days foresaw that the devil wanted to suffocate life through a woman, and thus in His wisdom, He built so great a tower that He brought forth another life through another woman in the chastity of innocence. Hence, O Wisdom, heaven and the angels adore you, and all the celestial militia marvel at you, saying, "Oh, oh, from the clay of the earth all the adorned miracles of God have arisen, so that a new sun has come forth, and a new light has shone, and a new song has sounded in us." Therefore, O Wisdom, let there be praise to you, because you found another woman whom the serpent could not deceive, who is the Virgin Mary, who crowned the entire human race, so that from now on the devil could not deceive man as he did before.

For Eve conceived all weeping in sorrow, but in Mary, joy, harp, and symphony sounded. She says thus to her son from virginity, "O most beloved son, whom I bore in my womb from the power of the encircling wheel of the holy divinity that created me and arranged all my members and constituted in my womb the entire genus of music in all the flowers of tones! Now a great crowd of virgins follows me and you, O most sweet son, whom you are worthy to save by your aid, saying, 'We walk in God, and we all follow you, honoring the angelic order. We have sweated from the earth! And we embrace you, O son of holy espousal. '"

Symphony of virgins.

Therefore, O most sweet lover and most sweet embrace, help us to keep our virginity. We are born in dust, alas, and in the sin of Adam! And therefore it is very hard to oppose what has the taste of the apple. But you, Savior Christ, lift us up. For we ardently desire to follow you. O how grievous it is for us wretches to imitate you, the spotless and innocent King of angels. Yet we trust in you, that you desire to seek a gem in the mire. Now we call upon you, bridegroom and comforter, who redeemed us on the cross. In your blood, we are

joined to you, with espousal, rejecting a man and choosing you, the Son of God.

O most beautiful form, O sweetest fragrance of desirable delights, we always sigh for you in tearful exile, when we might see you and stay with you. We are in the world, and you are in our minds, and we embrace you in our hearts as if we had you present. You, the strongest lion, broke the heavens, descending into the chamber of the Virgin and destroying death, building life in the golden city. Grant us companionship with her and to remain in you, O sweetest bridegroom, who drew us from the jaws of the devil, seducing our first parent. And also those who follow you in the most loving love after the carnal union, defend them from all incursions of their insidious ones, calling upon you thus.

Symphony of Widows

O Father of all and O King and Emperor of nations, You who established us in the rib of the first mother, which caused us great calamity. We followed her in our own cause, joining ourselves to her sorrow in exile. O most noble Father, we run to You with utmost zeal, and through the most beloved and sweetest penitence that came to us through You, we yearn for You. After our sorrow, we embrace You most devoutly. O most glorious and beautiful Christ, who is the resurrection of life, we have left behind the fertile lover of union for Your sake and have embraced You in supernal charity and in the virginal branch of Your nativity! And at another time, we are united to You more than we were before in the flesh. Help us to persevere with You, to rejoice with You, and never to be separated from You.

O great Father, we are in great necessity. Now, therefore, we beseech You, beseech You through Your Word, by which You constituted us, that it may please You, Father, to look upon us with Your help so that we may not fail! And that Your name may not be obscured in us. And for the sake of Your name, deign to assist us. And again, a voice

from heaven said, O creation of God, which is man, you are built in great sanctity because holy divinity penetrated the heavens in humility. O how great is the piety that the divinity shone in the clay of the earth and that the angels ministering to God see God in humanity. But oh, what a marvelous thing it is that ash in decay and in the great misery of its wounds of sins does not wish to look upon God. But the Word of the Father was made flesh for the sake of man. Therefore, let all men rejoice and with tearful voices lament their sins, turning to Him who took on flesh without sin for the purpose of wiping away their sins.

Now, beloved ones, embrace this most noble young man and love him with great reverence, who washed you in His blood and showed you the penance for sins and the medicine for your wounds. Again, a voice from heaven sounded, O vile stool, flee, flee! The high stairs will give off the smoke of spices. Woe, woe to earthly cause. For it will hide itself because the living eye that sees will strike it on the cheek. The Spirit rejoices! O, O unhappy earth laments over itself. Alas, alas. It has windowed places in this time through the illusion of the ancient serpent, but the tearing of the temple veil of God has not yet come. O virgin Church! It is lamentable that the fierce wolf has snatched your children from your side. O woe to the cunning serpent. But how precious is the blood of the Savior, who betrothed the Church to Himself in the banner of the King! Hence, He seeks His children. Now let the maternal womb of the Church rejoice because her children are placed in her bosom in heavenly symphony. Wherefore, O most vile serpent, you are confounded! For those whom you thought to have in your bowels now shine in the blood of the Son of God. And therefore, praise to you, highest King.

O adorned Church, girded with divine arms and adorned with hyacinth! You are the sweetness of the stigmas of the cross and the city of knowledge! O, you are also a chrysanthemum in high sound! And you are a precious gem. And again, I heard a voice from heaven

saying, O power of eternity, who arranged all things in your heart through your Word, all were created as you willed. And that same Word took on flesh in the formation that was drawn from Adam, and thus its garments were wiped from the greatest sorrow. O how great is the kindness of the Savior who liberated all through His incarnation, which divinity breathed without the bond of sin. And O blood of the Savior, which sounded on high when all elements intertwined, with lamentable voice and trembling because the blood of their Creator touched them! Cleanse yourselves from His wounds.

O shepherd of souls and O first voice through which all creatures were created! Now, Father, may it please You to deign to free Your own from their miseries and sorrows. For one arose from the earth who sounded on high, namely the brightest star calling out with the clearest voice to men that they should repent of their unjust deeds. God indeed remembered that He wanted to recreate man in a different way through repentance from his evils. Wherefore, let the heavens hear and the earth tremble that God receives the penitent man. And that all the angels receive him in praise, venerating him. And therefore, woe to the man who despises the sinful man, for the Son of God redeemed him with His blood and receives the penitent.

The first work of God's Word came forth in His voice! And thus it was done! Then the same Word placed the walls of the building to be established, and thus the world appeared. Then the eye of God beheld the form of man and breathed the breath of life into him, and imbued his heart with knowledge. And thus the heaven was full and had eyes everywhere! And it ministered to its Lord. Then the roaring one, saying to himself, Alas, alas. Every creature of God flashes, and none are with me. And thus from his mouth he blew like a black sea because he was not bodily! And he sent it to man. Then the Word of God saw that His creation was touched by a cloud and came into the entire earth, namely into the most noble virgin, from whom He took flesh, and thus wiped away the black sea from man and confounded

the ancient serpent. Wherefore, O flourishing branch, you stand in your nobility as the dawn proceeds. Now rejoice and be glad and deign to free your weak ones from evil habits and extend your hand to lift us up. Hail, noble, glorious, and untouched maiden! You are the pupil of chastity, the material of holiness that pleased God. For there was a heavenly infusion in you, that the supreme Word took flesh in you. You, the white lily, whom God looked upon before all creation. O most beautiful and sweetest one, how greatly God delighted in you when He placed the embrace of His warmth in you, so that His Son was nursed by you! Your womb indeed had joy when all the celestial symphony resounded from you because you bore the Son of God! Where your chastity shone in God. Your bowels rejoiced, like the grass upon which the dew falls when it infuses greenness into it, as it happened in you. O mother of all joy.

Now let the whole Church shine in joy and sound in symphony for the sweetest and most praiseworthy Virgin Mary, Mother of God.

Now again, hail, O branch and diadem of the purple king, you who are in your enclosure like armor. You blossomed and flourished in a different succession than Adam, who produced the whole human race. Hail, hail, from your womb another life has come forth, by which Adam had stripped his children naked. O flower, you did not sprout from dew nor from raindrops, nor did the air hover over you, but divine brightness produced you in the most noble branch. O branch, God foresaw your blossoming on the first day of His creation, and by His Word made you a golden substance, O praiseworthy virgin. O how great in His strength is the side of man from which God produced the form of woman, whom He made the mirror of all His ornament and the embrace of all His creation. Hence the heavenly organs sing, and the whole earth marvels, O praiseworthy Mary, for God has greatly loved you. O how much to be mourned and lamented it is that sadness flowed into woman through the serpent's counsel. For the woman whom God appointed

as the mother of all, in her ignorance tore her own womb with the wounds of ignorance, and brought forth complete sorrow for her kind. But O dawn, from your womb a new sun has arisen that wiped away all the crimes of Eve, and through you brought forth greater blessing than Eve had harmed men.

Wherefore, O savior, who brought forth a new light for the human race, gather the members of your Son into the heavenly harmony. And again, I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Behold, O golden power, how glorious you are, who existed in the first sound, so that all the elements received life, and who afterwards tasted holiness in Abel, so that innocent blood was shed. And who later through Noah in the ark showed new miracles, so that the whole earth was stripped of the creatures that were on it. You, wisdom, brought forth new juice from the earth, and in Abraham made the name of the Holy Trinity to be adored, and gave him circumcision which foretold the incarnation of the Lord. O star! In your brightness, you showed a beautiful form before the sons of men, so that the magi adored the Son of God as a suckling child, and from His face virtues shone, where He called all the sons of men again, because all the elements and all the sons of men saw the Word of God in the face of a man.

Hear then, O man, and say, I erase emulation! But I have contradiction within myself. Woe, woe to this evil, in which it condemned me. Wherefore, O God, who made man in Your image and likeness, and perfected all good in him, and crushed all evil in him, and broke the confines of hell from which You took many souls, by the merits of these strengths of Yours, free Your faithful who have fully performed their office of will, but who have sometimes looked to You in faith. And O fire of the Paraclete Spirit, life of the life of all creation, You are holy, giving life to forms. You are holy, anointing the dangerously broken. You are holy, wiping away fetid wounds. O breath of holiness, O fire of love, O sweet taste in the breasts and infusion of hearts with the good odor of

virtues. O purest fountain in which it is considered that God gathers strangers and seeks out the lost. O armor of life and hope of the joining of all members, and O belt of honor, save the blessed. Guard those who are imprisoned by the enemy and release the bound whom the divine power wishes to save. O most strong path that penetrated all things in the highest and in the earthly and in all abysses, You arrange and gather all. From You, the clouds flow, the ether flies, the stones have moisture, the waters bring forth streams, and the earth sweats with greenness. You also always bring forth the learned through the inspiration of wisdom, made joyful.

Wherefore, praise be to You, who are the sound of praise and the joy of life, the strongest honor giving the reward of light. O fiery Spirit! Again, praise be to You, who work in timbrels and harps. The minds of men burn with You and the tabernacles of their souls contain their strength. Thence will rises and gives the taste of the soul, and its lamp is desire. Understanding calls upon You in the sweetest sound, and prepares buildings for You with rationality, which it sweats in golden works. You always have a sword to cut off what the most black murderer's fruit brings forth, when a fog governs the will in which the soul flies and circles everywhere. But the mind is the binding of will and desire. When the spirit rises in such a way that it seeks to see the pupil of evil and the cheek of wickedness, You burn it quickly in fire when You will. But when rationality inclines itself to wicked works, You bind and crush it with power, and bring it back through the infusion of trials. When evil leads its sword to You, You turn it back into its heart as You did with the first lost angel, where You cast down the tower of pride into hell. And there, You raised another tower in the publicans and sinners, who confess their sins with their works to You. Wherefore, all creatures that live from You praise You, because You are the most precious ointment for the broken and fetid wounds, which You convert into the most precious

gems. Now deign to gather men to Yourself and guide them to the right paths.

Now again, O my daughters, hear and perceive these words from the living light having no part of any darkness! And observe yourselves in all things from evil. For the hiss of the devil will come, and the hiss of many storms. But even in some time, the Chaldeans will weaken, the Greeks will become stronger, the Romans will fall silent with the other Romans like a burning fire that falls, and the Gauls will become tender. But all these things will not always be. And the parts of the passing world run in three parts! In which kings and leaders will endure a flood of troubles. And a king will rise cultivating a great battle! And there is no one to help him except a thousand-armed number of those who have no foreskin. And so men will be wearied. But your place, O my daughters, God will not destroy, but He will drive away those who beg in vanity and negligence. And He will cast away schisms and terrors. But some blind and lame trying to absorb Him will not prevail! Because a spark of scrutiny will sift them out.

Wherefore, make your minds like a man looking into a garden where flowers and fruit-bearing trees grow so that he may take the fragrance of those flowers into his nostrils and eat of those same fruits. For the fragrance of flowers is that a man abstaining from sins desires to imitate the goodness of the just, but the food of fruits is where a man faithfully governs others subject to him, and where in the grace of God he gives alms to the needy. Therefore, he merits to hear the voice of his Lord saying thus, "This man touches Me through his office! And through the giving of alms, he anoints Me in mercy." This man stands between two ways, one of which is rotten, the other shining through the sun. But the rotten way is the pleasure of this world, which every faithful person should flee, lest he be suffocated in it. When he does this, the saints symphonize praising God, saying, "This man is not in the rottenness of worldly pleasure!"

But he who looks to God in the way of the sun's light, fearing and loving God, will hear the voice of his Lord thus, "Well done, good and faithful servant." But he who deviates to the rotten way, unless he pulls himself out, will incur the danger of the greatest calamities. Therefore, praise be to the blood of Christ who clothes His faithful with the armor of justice and all the armor of virtues. For the blood of Christ restores the faithful to a place of refreshment. And you, O Jerusalem, rejoice, rejoice! For you receive those who truly believe in the passion of the Son of God.

But also, O dawn of salvation, you shine in blessedness because Jerusalem preserves her children in joy. Therefore, the angels cry out in praises about them, saying, "We harvest from your works in the winepress, and therefore we have you in our company! Where the morning star flees like a snake hiding in its hole." The Holy Spirit thus inspired some men among some peoples who were not yet deceitful. O, O, O. Afterwards, God placed wisdom in the dawn. Alas, alas, alas. And He made an instrument in Himself, namely a great mountain of justice. Alas, alas, alas. Now the justice of the mountain has become a way like a shadow through the gluttonous throat of the erring. But you, O strength of the mountain, will not entirely wither away! But you will rise in a high window, when many eagles look upon you. O great thing that has not been hidden in any appointed thing. So that it was neither made nor created by any! But remains in itself. O life that rose in the dawn in which the great King mercifully manifested the wisdom that was with the wise man in the ancient time, because a woman through the hole of the ancient destroyer brought death. O lament, oh sorrow, oh wailing! That were built in the woman. O dawn! You have washed these away in the form of the first rib. O female form, sister of wisdom! How glorious you are! Because the strongest life rose in you, which death can never suffocate. Wisdom raised you! So that all creatures were adorned through you in a better way than they first received.

Wherefore, O greenest branch, hail, you who sprouted forth through the windy breath of the saints' inquiries. When the time came that you flourished in your branches! Hail, hail be to you, because the heat of the sun sweated in you like the odor of balsam. For in you blossomed a beautiful flower that gave fragrance to all the spices that were dry. And they all appeared in full greenness. Wherefore the heavens gave dew upon the grass, and all the earth became joyful because its bowels brought forth grain. And because the birds of heaven had nests in it. Then it became food for men and great joy for those feasting. Therefore, O sweet virgin, in you no joy fails. All this Eve despised. Now, however, praise be to the Most High.

O mediating branch, your holy bowels overcame death! And your womb illuminated all creatures with the beautiful flower that arose from the sweetest integrity of your enclosed modesty. What is this? O how great a miracle it is! That the King entered into the humble female form. God did this! Because humility ascended above all. And oh, how great is the happiness in that form, because the malice that flowed from the woman, this woman afterwards wiped away, and built every sweetest odor of virtues and adorned the heaven more than it had first disturbed the earth. O you illuminated by divine brightness, clear virgin Mary, infused with the Word of God, wherefore your womb blossomed from the entrance of the Spirit of God, who breathed into you and sucked out from you what Eve took away in the cutting off of purity through the suggestion of the devil. You marvelously hid in yourself the immaculate flesh through divine reason, when the Son of God blossomed in your womb led by holy divinity against the laws of the flesh, which Eve constructed, joined in integrity in divine bowels.

Hear then, O man, this miracle. Hail Mary, O author of life, restoring salvation, who disturbed death and crushed the serpent, to whom Eve raised herself with an erect neck through the breath of pride. You trampled him when from heaven you bore the Son of God

whom the Spirit of God inspired. O sweetest and most loving mother, hail, who presented your son fixed in heaven to the world. What is this? O most clear mother of holy medicine! You poured ointments through your holy son into the lamenting wounds of death, which Eve had built into the torments of souls. You destroyed death by building life. Pray for us to your son, star of the sea, Mary. O life-giving instrument and joyful ornament and sweetness of all delights that never fail in you. Now the closed gate has opened to the world that the serpent had suffocated in the woman! Wherefore the flower shines in the dawn from the Virgin Mary. Because the woman built death, the clear virgin destroyed it! And therefore, the highest blessing is in the female form above all creation! Because God was made man in the sweetest and blessed virgin.

O how precious is the virginity of this virgin who has a closed gate, and whose holy bowels the divine brightness infused with His warmth, so that the flower grew in her! And the Son of God came forth from her secrets like the dawn. Wherefore, the sweet offspring, which is her son, opened paradise through the closure of her womb. Let the earth hear! Let the elements tremble. For what reason? Because all creation received the first birth of this virgin with joy, so that the heavens blazed like dawn for the manifestation of virtues and for the clear strength that shone in them! Because the sun of truth breathed all the sanctification of souls in this virgin. Therefore, O my daughters! Hear me, the living fountain speaking to you. Let holy and chosen greenness be in you, and not the power of the devil who forsakes God in vile wounds. These words a good eye sees and a good ear hears! But a stony mind does not perceive them, which forsakes God and embraces the devil, building a great tower in hell.

O good and upright desires! How much brightness you have, where your sweet odor ascends to God. It is very hard for the human race to oppose the pleasure of earthly things. Therefore, let my daughters hear these words. The first evil in recklessness deceived and

suffocated the work of man through the woman, expelled into the mountain of towers in lamentation, in which the forms of right affection ought to have appeared. For the hostile robber and deceitful suggester came and wrapped that affection in the blackness of quick sin and in the foulness of pollution! So that it could not be pure. O, O, O creature. Alas, alas, alas to the world. Woe, woe to contrary pleasure, which was bent into death when it was cut off from heaven and placed in hell, where the devil vomited it when he suffocated innocence. But the Son of God left this shadowy pleasure that could not pass through the light, and came by another way where there was no deceitful nature! And thus through Him, innocence arose. And so He led the sons of Adam, born from contrary pleasure, drawing them to Himself through the wounds of the fixed nails on the instrument of the cross, breaking their bonds where they were bound in the chain of the taste of evil work and in the breast of iniquity! And in the sweetness of sin. Therefore, O my daughters, you should always crucify yourselves in memory of the same Son of mine for your own causes, so that you do not fail because of the deceitful tyrant.

Let no spits of bitter anger and flaming mind of pride grow among you. Nor vanity that tears apart the honor of sanctification, lest you fall from me. But let your joy be in me! And let the heavenly kingdom be your reward! And let holy peace be among you. O daughters of Jerusalem! The great physician and utmost zeal of good desires to grasp you, and there is no one who can separate you from Him. Wherefore, O deceitful mocker! How or where do you go in incongruous cases? You will fall into terror. And I, a humble form, was greatly burdened with the weight of heavy sickness because the Spirit of the Lord constrained me and commanded me to say these words to the daughters of this place. Do you think that by feasts of foods and drinks and by the wantonness of manners you will receive

the kingdom of God? No. For the kingdom of God is received through the mortification of the body and the contrition of the mind.

I have prepared my table with the splendor of my crown before you so that you may bring the royal feasts of the heavenly inheritance upon it. And manna and the beasts of the forests and the birds and pomegranates! But you do not do this. For on the other hand, you bring me certain secular manners of legal discipline. And on the other, the discipline of those joined in marriage which I do not seek from you. Because I did not choose you in this garden, but in my chosen vineyard. And I have borne this for eight years, but for five years I have kept silent. But for three years, I have chastised those who dishonored me in the splendor of my crown inside and outside their place. All these things must be understood this way. Let none of the faithful think that through gluttony of the belly and through the outpouring of their pleasures they will attain heavenly glory! For those who desire to have it must embrace the mortification of the body and the lowliness of heart in good will and not in bitter malignity.

My table is prepared with the splendor of my crown before you so that you may bring the royal feasts of the heavenly inheritance upon it, signifying the angels with the splendor of the crown, namely the miracles of God that shine among men in many miracles, so that in them many wonders are prepared for those living blessedly. This designates those who offer their diligent and holy works in the angelic order to their Creator. For the angels do not offer the relics of the secular works of men who live according to carnal desires to God, but those who, leaving behind carnal desires, prostrate their bodies to the ground for God and always insist on the praises of God like angels. The manna signifies obedience which God imposed on man to obey God, and to be subject to his prelates who are set over him by God, and which He also fixed in the rest of creation, so that they serve the utility of man. For God made man, and man did not

create himself. And therefore, the spiritual people, like angels, should serve God through obedience, which Lucifer dispersed and showed man disobedience.

But the beasts of the forests indicate that those who have renounced the world should cast away the world with all its pomps, and that they should be like guests and pilgrims, so that as beasts avoid men, so they should avoid all custom and all society of the world! Like true hermits who enclosed themselves from the world, lest death enter through the windows of their eyes. But the birds are the precepts of blessed Benedict and other Catholic doctors who drew them from the Holy Spirit, and through which men, living not as carnal beings, survive. The pomegranates declare the love of God in the hearts of those who are surrounded by these good and holy works, and who gather the most diligent virtues by praying and weeping, and who taste the words of the saints by imitating their lives. But you do not do this, looking instead to carnal desires and negligence. For on the other hand, you bring me the diversities of carnal pleasures according to the observance of those young women who serve the world studiously and diligently as if disciplined, as stated before. And on the other hand, you turn to the constriction and pleasure of various studies of those who frequently indulge in carnal embraces, so that lovers may please their lovers! Which I neither demand from you in word nor writing nor command because you adhere to spiritual union, not serving carnal embrace with the eye. Wherefore I have not fitted you into the vain and soon-falling floridness of worldly decay, but I have led you into the vineyard of true election and true blessedness! So that in the highest election you may receive the reward of your labors.

For I bore with it for eight years that you began to do the vanity of children, and then played in the same vanity due to its bad habit, and that afterward you sinned in some part of the same vanity. For I ignored this vanity for five years as if I did not know it! But when

some of you afterward struck me on the cheek with certain signs, I raised my hand and for three years I chastised them inside and outside their place with various pains, and also struck the fatness of sin there with an open sign, where I bore neglect in the beauty of betrothal. In my zeal which struck the firstborn of Egypt and submerged Pharaoh in the Red Sea, who despised me in many signs which I showed him, I rose up and struck down a certain man so that he might see certain penalties of his sins and feel certain ones, namely mixed with cold and fire! And I did this to them as a demonstration of an example. Some of them seeing and hearing these many signs that I showed them did not want to recognize me. But let that man whom I thus scourged in my zeal and the others in this dwelling beware lest they return to their former transgressions, lest they be suffocated in the Red Sea. For I do not wish to bear the former things from now on. For it is necessary that they rise to a better part! Because God wills that they do not forsake His law.

Now therefore, O my daughters, before the girding of that oppression which I will do in the spiritual people who tore my tunic and who divided my garment and who left the covenant I made with them, rise to me at once. O woe to the sinful nation that lies in the ways of rottenness and that is always impudent through the wantonness of vices, and that through the excess of vices sucks the teats of pigs. Wherefore let it say, O Lord, who provided man with food and clothing, and washed his pains in the blood of the Lamb, look that the black wind mocks us and wants to shake off the sprouts of holiness from us! And cut him off from our midst, for the time of the fullness of schisms has not yet come, when all the earth will be stripped of the garment of consecration.

Now therefore, O daughters, see and hear and flee this perilous wind and run to your king. And when you have done this, the blessings of that beatitude which cherubim and seraphim and the whole order of the heavenly host look upon in the face of God will flow upon this

place and its daughters like the early and latter rain. And virtues will multiply in them and the riches of the lands. But also all who bless you will multiply in blessings. And God will look upon this place and not forget it. Therefore grow and multiply over the mountains and hills of sanctification through the most holy gift of God.

Wherefore, whoever wishes to bless you, let the earth fill him with blessings! And whoever wishes to curse you, let him be accursed by just judgment. For you are my mirror. But what do you think in your hearts? In me is what I wish to perfect in you. What is this? This is what is just. May the gift of the grace of God pour over you so that you are not overwhelmed by the enemy. Therefore, do not forsake me.

Letter 265: R265: Cathedral Chapter von St. Martin to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

The convent of brothers from the house in Mainz. To Hildegard.

To the most beloved lady and most holy mother and servant of Christ and teacher of the sisters in the monastery of Saint Robert in Bingen. Hildegard! The entire convent of brothers from Saint Martin in the house of God with consent to walk! and in this valley of tears to please the bridegroom of virgins. Because it is right that in our cases we should consider the will of God. We flee to the mercy of your compassion! in which the divine gift, unusual and unheard of in our times, by which God has regarded and wonderfully enriched you, not for the use of yourself alone, but by the command of God you turn many. For indeed we have seen and heard of the miracles which the Lord works through you. Although unworthy, we offer the praises to Him! but because many times we neglect God, we are worn down by many tribulations, we are afflicted by infinite calamities, we are subjected to countless anxieties! and so that we may not perish utterly in despair, it is as necessary as it is right that we flee to those who love God with all their heart and have chosen the best part with Mary, and seek their counsel and assistance. It has indeed been reported to us by truthful persons that you have written some things against the error of the Cathars, as you saw in a vision of God's secrets. This we earnestly ask you to transmit to us! because we believe in the divine revelation and response more than in human testimony. Therefore, we commend ourselves to your holy prayers! asking that whatever your bridegroom, our Lord Jesus, will deign to reveal to you concerning these matters, you may have written to us with good will as befits you. Farewell.

Letter 266: R266: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Cathedral Chapter von St. Martin

Hildegard on the Cathars.

In the month of July of the present year, which is the one thousand one hundred sixty-third year of the Lord's incarnation, looking from afar, I saw in the shadow of a true vision under the altar which is before the eyes of God! and I also saw under the throne of God. And I saw that the twenty-four elders who sit around the seat were moving the sea of glass which is in the presence of the seat! and they said, Let us move the vain foundations of the mockery of those who want to place their injustice as justice. And let us move the sparks of their burning injustice, those who say they rule the people and do not rule! and let us move the pipes of the filth of varied customs and the gilded strings of those mocked and the schisms of schisms. For the ancient lion roars! wanting to fly in the midst of the aforementioned sparks of burning injustice. But this will not be the case. Let us call upon the ancient one in whom all kinds of the born, and all the counted creatures, are. And let us consider the sword that appeared in the mouth of the speaker. And let us see in what number there are two pounds of wheat and barley! and let us consider the trumpet which sounds before the first woe. And by the oath of these and by the virtue of Him who sits on the throne, let us bind the neck of the ancient lion. And let us restrain him with a bridle so that before the time of times and half a time, and before forty months, he may not send the sea after the woman fleeing into the desert. For it is twenty-three years and four months since the perverse works of men, which are exhaled from the mouth of the black beast, have moved the four winds by the four corners of the corners into great ruin, as the same works ascended above them. So that in the east the succession of filthy customs was exhaled, and in the west blasphemy and forgetfulness of God in His saints by the fame of the calf and by

the worship of idols tormenting the holy sacrifice. And in the south of hateful vices. And in the north phylacteries of garments according to the twisting serpent extended! which, along with all the aforementioned evils afterward coming upon them, were contaminated. But yet it has been sixty years and twenty-four months! that the ancient serpent began to deceive the peoples with the phylacteries of garments. Now, however, innumerable saints of God who are under the altar lift up their voices, crying out that the sprinkling of their bodily ashes has been violated by the iniquity of the people. Hence a wind blows from their sound which now works miracles. But he who sat upon the black horse emits the whistles of a contrary wind in error! but he will not prevail. And again the ancient dragon roars in anger against the saints, lifting himself up on the wings of the winds! and says, What is this? That which they and those like them have established! I will destroy. And they answer him, Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand! and weighed the heavens with a span? Who has measured the mass of the earth with three fingers! and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance? For we are measured in the balance of God! in which we do all things by the fiery spark that shines before His face. But you have a fire in your eye to burn, and from it you will draw a flame almost to the place of your first constitution. And this you will do against God and against the heavens and against all who dwell in heaven. But not yet. But when God weighed the heavens with a span, then a burning mountain will fall upon your neck. And all your strength will be utterly destroyed. But from the throne a new song will then be given to us! and eyes that see everything from everywhere by looking and observing. But you have not yet the time of devouring in your most voracious throat. Wherefore, by the throne of God and by all His garments, cease from this insanity of yours. But you, peoples and nations! hear the spirit speaking to you. The ancient serpent makes towers in your

midst in his ear. Namely with those who are like the Sadducees, and like those who name Baal as God and do not know the righteous God! so that by the art of a deceptive spirit, they sometimes appear to them as a spark, namely either black or turbid or bright and local, which soon vanishes. And this is diabolical and deceptive! for the deceptive spirits sometimes make themselves like the four elements and all their powers, because they overcame the first man. But that which is from God, there is wisdom and prophecy, and a hidden revelation in things alien which do not pertain to man! for God is incomprehensible. But these men, of whom the devil makes towers in his ear, are like the crab that walks forward and backward, and like scorpions that secretly sting you with burning tails, and with the worst venom of cruel infidelity they kill you. Whom the devil sometimes invades with certain divine precepts, which they seek of their own will because they are the image of God! and he does this so that he may deceive them afterward more easily by mocking them. These are also like some great birds! which, by scattering their own eggs, cast them away. And they say, Let us cast this from us. because it is venomous. These are the ones who deny the first principles, namely that God created all things and commanded them to proceed by germination and growth. These are the ones who deny the dominical principle, namely that before the antiquity of days it appeared that the Word of God should become man. These are worse for you than the Jews who now have blind eyes to see the fiery form which now shines as man in the holy divinity! who, however, after a long time will think they see the righteous one. Until God strikes with the fiery whip the one they were considering. These are also sulfurous mountains mixed with fire with the most wicked beast which will open its mouth against God, and against heaven and against all who are in heaven! and they are also the entrails of the same incongruous beast which takes in and spews out the worst filth and precedes it by embracing the filth and wickedness of all evils by

the way of the erring as the prophets prophesied the Lord in the way of salvation showing Him with all the virtues of justice which the finger of God inspired and taught! just as the devil fills these with blasphemy and wickedness and the lie of all evils. For the ancient serpent, at the beginning of his fall, the key which he thought he had failed him. But now he reckons in himself that this most wicked beast is his key. So that with it he may accomplish all his will. But in it all his strength will be utterly broken. Now you peoples who have the purest faith, looking to God! hear the voice of Him who was and who is, and who is to come saying to you. Hear the words of the priests who hold and keep my justice. And in whose ears these my words will sound. And who will also speak these words to you in my name! and with their crying voices cast out the aforementioned unclean and profane people from among you. And with harsh and hard words torment them. And lead them utterly to expulsion. And chase them completely into unhappy caves and dens. Because they want to seduce you! and also do this for the reason that you may not be anathematized by God and that peace may not flee from you! for you cannot be called teachers and priests, kings and leaders and princes before God as long as you give them dwellings with you. Because your cities and villages will be destroyed, and your fields will be plundered because of these criminal men. if they remain with you. Now praise be to God who sits upon the throne and looks into the abysses! and who holds all the heavens in His dominion. And the spirit of God says. Whoever has neglected to hear and understand these words. and has not wished to believe them! the sword of the word of God will kill him with great tribulation. And soon in the same vision, I heard a torrent voice saying to me. These things which you have seen and heard write. and quickly transmit them to the priests of the church who worship God with the purest faith. so that they may preach them to the people everywhere around them. so that they may guard themselves from these diabolical arts! lest they

put down roots among them and perish. But I, a poor little form, languished afterward for many days in infirmity oppressed by sickness. so that I could not fully stand on my feet! until I had committed these writings.

Letter 267: R267: Philipp von St. Peter in Köln to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Philip the dean with the other clerics. To Hildegard.

Philip the dean, though unworthy of the greater church, and all the clergy of Cologne, to Hildegard of Saint Robert in Bingen, venerable follower of that part which Mary chose, and now through the purity of heart, and in the future to see God face to face. Because we love your motherly compassion, we make known to you that after you recently departed from us, having come to us by divine command, where you opened to us the words of life as God inspired you, we were led into great admiration! because God works such great wonders of His secrets in so fragile a vessel, in so fragile a sex of humanity. But the spirit breathes where it wills. For since it is evident from many signs of things that in your heart He has chosen a pleasing seat for Himself, rightly and we, in our admiration, approach you as if to a living temple of God to offer our prayers! and we earnestly seek answers of truth from your heart, as indeed from the oracle of God. We earnestly beseech your blessedness to commend our desires to God more earnestly, as they concern the care of souls! and if in true vision, as usual, your mind adhering to God perceives anything concerning us, you should take care to inform us by letter. We also ask that those things which you previously said to us with a living voice, you also commit to letters and send to us! because while we are given to carnal desires, spiritual things, which we neither frequently see nor hear, are easily consigned to forgetfulness through negligence. May your love be well, and may He be with you whom you love with all your heart.

Letter 268: R268: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to the Clergy von Köln

To the clergy of Cologne. From Hildegard.

Him who was, and who is, and who is to come! speaks to the pastors of the Church. He who was, was about to create the creature! so that He had the testimony of testimonies in Himself, making all His works as He willed. He who is made every creature and showed the testimony of testimonies in all His works, so that each formed thing appeared. He who is to come will purify all things and will renew them again in another succession, and will wipe away all the wrinkles of times and times, and will make all things new simultaneously and always, and after the purification, He will show unknown things. From Him flows the wind saying thus: I have placed the firmament with all its ornaments! lacking no power. Indeed, it has eyes as if for seeing, ears for hearing, nostrils for smelling! a mouth for tasting. For the sun is like the light of its eyes, the wind is the hearing of its ears, the air is its smell, the dew is its taste, sweating its greenness like the breath of its mouth. The moon also gives the times of times! and thus shows knowledge to men. But the stars are as if they were rational! because they have a circle just as rationality comprehends many things. I have also established the four corners of the world with fire, cloud, and water. And thus I have joined all the boundaries of the earth as if with veins. I have poured out stones from fire and water like bones, and I have constituted the earth from moisture and greenness as if a marrow. I have stretched out the abysses as those that sustain the body! around which sweating waters are for their firmament. Thus all things are constituted! so that they do not fail. If clouds did not have fire and water, there would be no firm coagulation. And if the earth did not have greenness and moisture, it would be like ashes. But if the other lights did not have light from the fire of the sun, they would not

shine through the waters! but would be blind. These are also the instruments of the building of man, which he comprehends by touching, kissing, and embracing when they serve him! by touching because man remains in them, by kissing because he has knowledge with them! by embracing because he exercises noble power with them. But man would have no license of possibility! if these were not with him. Thus these are with man! and man is with them. O little children who feed my flocks with the instruction of the Lord's voice why are you not ashamed when the other creatures do not desert the commands they have from their master but fulfill them! I have constituted you like the sun and other lights! so that you might shine for men through the fire of doctrine, gleaming with good reputation and preparing burning hearts. This I did in the first age of the world. For I chose Abel. I loved Noah. I showed myself to Abraham. I imbued Moses with the institution of the law! I also constituted the prophets my most beloved friends. Hence Abel prefigured the priesthood. Noah the principal instruction. Abraham the renewal of the offspring. Moses the royal message! and the prophets many teachings. And Abel, like the moon, shed his splendor because he showed the time of obedience in his gift. And Noah like the sun because he perfected the building of obedience. And Abraham like the strong planets when he brought circumcision! And Moses like the other stars when he gathered the law through obedience. And the prophets stood firm like the four corners which sustain the boundaries of the earth, when they corrected the world because of imminent iniquity! through which also they showed God. But your tongues are mute in the crying voice of the Lord's sounding trumpet, not loving holy rationality which, like the stars, has the circle of circuit. The trumpet of the Lord is the justice of God, which you ought to chew with great zeal! also iterating it in the official law and obedience with holy discretion at appropriate times for the people, and not imposing it on them in excess. But this you

do not do because of the money of your own will. Hence the lights of the justice of God are lacking in your tongues! like when the stars do not shine. For you are a night breathing darkness, and like a people not laboring, nor walking in the light because of weariness, but like a naked snake hiding in a cave, so you enter the filth in the vileness of the cattle. Ah, ah. You should be as it is said, Mount Zion! in which you dwelled. For you blessed and signed in heavenly persons ought to be a dwelling smelling of myrrh and frankincense, in which also God would dwell. But this you are not. But you are quick to the lasciviousness of childish age of those namely, who do not know how to speak of their salvation. And you do whatever your flesh demands! therefore it is said of you. Lift your hands against their arrogance to the end! how the enemy has acted maliciously in the sanctuary. For the power of God will lower your necks raised by iniquity and will reduce to nothing those things that are inflated as if by the breath of the wind when you do not know God. nor do you fear man. nor do you despise iniquity. so that you desire it to end in you. For you do not see God nor desire to see Him. but you look at your works and judge them in yourselves. namely doing and leaving according to your pleasure what you will. O how great is this malice and enmity that man neither for God nor for man wants to be in good conversion. but desires honor without labor. and eternal rewards without abstinence! and desires to sound in vain as if in holiness according to what the devil says. I am good and holy. But not this. What do you say now? You do not have eyes when your works do not shine to men in the fire of the Holy Spirit! and when you do not chew His good examples. Hence the firmament of the justice of God lacks the light of the sun in you! and the air lacks the building of virtues in the odor of sweetness. Hence it is said. They have eyes but they do not see. they have nostrils but they do not smell. For as the winds blow and cover the whole world. so you ought to be swift winds with your doctrine for all people! as it is

said. Their sound has gone out into all the earth. But you are already weary in each flying secular fame. so that sometimes you are soldiers. sometimes servants. sometimes jesting singers. but by your fabulous offices you sometimes drive away flies in summer. By the doctrine of the scriptures which are composed from the fire of the Holy Spirit. you ought to be the corners of the strength of the church supporting it. like the corners that sustain the boundaries of the earth. but you are prostrated nor do you hold the church. but you flee into the cave of your pleasure! and because of the weariness of riches and avarice and other vanities you do not instruct your subordinates nor do you permit them to seek doctrine from you saying. We cannot labor on everything. For you ought to immerse and constrain them by the precepts of the law. lest any of them through frailty as through the marrow should do what he chooses for himself. as the earth soaked and constrained by moisture and greenness lest it be ashes. But because of you they are scattered like ashes and in each matter they do what they want. For you ought to be a fiery column, leading them and calling to them, and performing good works before them and saying, Take hold of discipline lest the Lord be angry! and you perish from the just path. For the law of the Lord, through love and fear, is full of discipline, and therefore every nature, both spiritual and carnal, must be exercised on the right path, lest the Creator threaten those He has created who do not walk in His ways. But you deceive yourselves, saying, Neither these nor those can we overcome. If you would correct your subordinates truthfully with the rationality that God has given you, they would not dare resist the truth! but would say as much as they could that your words were true. But because you do not do this, it is said of you, They were troubled and moved like a drunkard! and all their wisdom is devoured. This is what it means. For you are troubled when you have no regard for good in yourselves, so as to walk well. You are also moved in great doubt when your works do not give you

a right answer, as if you do not know what to do like a drunkard! when you do what the desire of your mind and your own will chooses. Hence all the wisdom you have sought from the scriptures and doctrine is devoured in the pit of your own will. when what you knew by touching and tasting, you did in your full desires and the fatness of your flesh! like an infant who does not know what to do in his infancy. Therefore, it is said to you. You do not have the morals of morality for the people in right stability, as feet sustain the rest of the body, so that you may surround them with the scriptures! as the abyss is surrounded by sweating waters on all sides. But you say, We do not have time to speak now. nor is it now the time to listen! as it was in former times. But I say. Abel did not abandon his offering to his Lord because of the hatred of his brother, but offered it to his Lord! although he was killed for this. Noah in the fearful judgment of the suffocation of creatures was greatly distressed, he sweated much, fearing death greatly, when he fulfilled the commands of God. Certain other men seeing this said. What does this fool do? For the winds will destroy him. But nevertheless, he fulfilled what God had commanded him. Abraham also, neither because of the pain of his heart nor the love of his son, ceased to bind his son as a holocaust. Moses too, the lawgiver! endured harsh and difficult times from his brothers and neighbors in much pain, but nevertheless, he did not abandon the law but fulfilled the commandments of God. The prophets too were killed by unbelieving men as if by rabid wolves while they obeyed God. But you in a small and fitting time do not want to endure injuries from the people! and therefore you gather innumerable and infinite torments into your bosom. You ought to be day! but you are night. For you will either be night or day. Choose for yourselves. in which part you want to stand. But you in the firmament of the justice and law of God are neither the sun nor the moon nor the stars but darkness! in which you lie as if dead. Hence I say again. God proposes the works

which He has done through Himself to those who turn away from Him. because they do not bear the sheaves of good fruits rightly. just as a father shows the works of his probity to his sons when they turn away from him! where they do not walk well in honesty. Adam in goodwill received the command of God, but by the counsel of the devil, he failed. wherefore he lost the brightness he had as a shining garment and the patrimony of paradise. and put on a lamentable garment and went into the dark earth. Then the devil rejoiced because he had mocked man. and he did this until Abel who loved God with good will. and showed that will by good work. But there the devil invaded Cain. so that he killed his brother. God saw these things in His mind as if written in a book. these mysteries the devil did not know because they appeared only in the holy divinity! because virginity in Abel was adorned with the priestly office and the blood of martyrdom! which was afterward all fulfilled in the Son of God. Then God prefigured the heavenly foundation through Noah in the building of the ark! where He produced a new world. For then the earth gave a new juice, namely wine, in which there is death and life. where also the devil persuaded Noah's son to dishonor his father because of his nakedness! wherefore that same son was also stripped of the blessing of freedom and made a slave. Afterward, the divinity through circumcision and true revelation showed the walls of the same foundation in Abraham! and also in a barren woman. For circumcision was the confusion of the serpent and the wound of death. The first woman was sterile of life! but the church through faith was fertile with life.

The devil, however, in certain descendants of Abraham, with a curse brought mockery through homicide and other evil deeds! whence they fell from the blessing of God. But the finger of God wrote the law of Moses, where He raised up the towers of the aforementioned foundation! wherefore the same devil there initiated the worst and greatest evil, which he had previously advised, here he openly

showed! when in Baal he said that he was God. Hence God struck the children of Israel with many plagues. Then the unicorn came and slept in the bosom of the virgin, when the Word of God was made flesh, and completed the entire heavenly foundation. For in the virgin nature, He was fully made the sacrifice of Abel through the blood of martyrdom. The ancient serpent indeed lay in wait for Him because he did not know who He was, and because he did not understand those mysteries which were in the mind of God, and he urged the Jewish people not to listen to Him in His miracles, but to seize Him sold by His disciple. Wherefore they were sold into various regions, and lost their own land. But the Son of God placed the Church like the ark of Noah on high mountains, when through His disciples He taught princes, leaders, and kings the faith. where He also filled it with all kinds, namely of the just, the publicans, and the sinners. He also began obedience in Abraham, when incarnate He obeyed His Father even unto death, and in circumcision gave baptism in the name of the Holy Trinity, when He commanded His disciples to baptize believers. In that same baptism, the serpent was suffocated in confusion, and death was conquered and wounded. wherefore the church bore a new generation through a foreign path, by which Eve was sterile of life! but Mary conferred greater grace than Eve had harmed. But the ancient serpent persuaded the Jews and unbelieving men to persecute and kill the saints of God! But the Son of God obtained the banner of victory in all His works, and gave the law to His disciples as to Moses, to teach all peoples and establish teachers, and adorn the church in all its orders. and they accomplished this by the inspiration of the Spirit of God who wrote the true doctrine in their hearts. And because the Word of God was incarnate, it pleased God that all orders of angels known by their names to men should be spiritually designated in the spiritual people. as in priests and bishops and in other such spiritual orders. Then the church appeared like the dawn in spiritual men, and thus

shone in virtues! because in their tribulations they had defense like a shield and protection like armor. And thus the spiritual people stood in great honor before God and men! until a certain tyrant who began to be Baal-like with the servitude of idols. When the spiritual people saw this! at first, they sighed and trembled. But nevertheless, the same spiritual people then entered into singularity and unique property in their actions, and turned away from the pact they had promised to God through the Holy Spirit, and as the Jews had done, they left one precept after another, and another after another! and each order set the law according to the will of its own property, and turned away from good conduct and good doctrine. Then they were also stripped of the garment of obedience as Adam was! and so they began to live according to the will of the flesh. And they did this in the dark land, just as Adam after disobedience was called dark by God! and the church did not shine as it had before, but became like the obscuration of a whirlwind. just as Adam because of disobedience was darkened, and neither he nor others shone, but walked in darkness. And from the living light I again heard a voice saying. O daughter of Zion, the crown of honor of the heads of your children will be bowed down, and the cloak of the expansion of their riches will be diminished. because they did not recognize the time given to them to see and teach their subordinates. For the breasts given to them to nourish my little ones are not provided at the right and fitting time! wherefore many of my children have perished from hunger because they are not nourished by right doctrine. They have a voice but do not cry out. they have works given to them but do not perform them. They want to have glory without merit, and merit without work. Whoever wants to have glory with God, let him cut off his own property! and whoever desires to have merit with God, let him exhibit work for it. But because you do not do this, you will be counted among the servants of servants. and they will be your judges. and your freedom will turn away from you as the blessing

from Canaan. These scourges will precede. but other and worse ones will come after. For the devil himself says of you. I find in these the food of feasters and the banquets of all my will. And my eyes and ears and belly and veins are full of their scum. and my breasts are full of their vices. For they do not want to labor in their God! but they count Him as nothing. Wherefore I will begin to fight with them and play with them in jest. because I do not find them laboring in the field of their Lord as their Lord commands them. But oh you disciples and subordinates of mine! you have been much more disciplined before the people than they. And because you are thus, rise up over them and take away all their riches and all their honor from them, and utterly stripping them, suffocate them. The devil says this to himself, and he will complete it in many ways by the judgment of God. But I, who am, say to those who hear me: In that time when this will happen, through a certain errant people, worse than the errant people who are now upon you, the ruin of transgressors will fall, who will persecute you everywhere and will not conceal your works, but will expose them! and will say of you: These are scorpions! in their morals and in their serpent-like works. And they will curse you almost with the zeal of the Lord: The way of the wicked will perish. For they will mock and scoff at your ways in your iniquity to destruction. But this people who will do this, seduced and sent by the devil, will come with pale faces, and will compose themselves as if in all sanctity, and will join themselves to greater secular princes. And to these they will say of you: Why do you hold these with you? and why do you permit them to be with you? who pollute the whole land with their filthy iniquities? For they are drunk and lecherous! and unless you cast them out from you, the whole church will be destroyed. This people who will say this about you will wear vile capes of a strange color, and will walk with their heads shaved in the right way, and will show themselves to men with all their manners as placid and quiet. They do not love

avarice either, they do not possess money. And in their hidden places they practice such abstinence that scarcely any of them can be blamed. For the devil is with these men, showing himself to them with a gleaming splendor, as he was in the constitution of the world before the fall. And he makes himself somewhat like the prophets and says: The people speak jestingly, saying that I will show myself to them like rabid and unclean animals and like flies. But now I want to fly on the wings of the winds with shining thunder, and infuse them in all ways so that they fulfill all my will. And thus in these men! I will make my signs similar to those of the Almighty God. For the devil works these things through airy spirits, who because of the evil works of men, in the breath of wind and air, run around in countless numbers as flies and gnats which in the heat of summer infest men in their multitude. For he infuses these men in this way: he does not take away chastity from them, and he permits them to be chaste when they wish to have chastity. And again he says to himself: God loves chastity and continence! which I will also imitate in these. And so the same ancient enemy inflates these men through airy spirits! so that they abstain from incestuous sins. Hence they do not love women! but flee from them. And thus they will show themselves to men almost in all sanctity! and with mocking words they will say: Other men who wanted to have chastity before us burned themselves like a dried fish. But no pollution of the flesh and concupiscence dares touch us! because we are holy and infused with the Holy Spirit. Woe, errant men who now are do not know what they do! as also those who preceded us in former times. For other men who wander in the Catholic faith at that time will fear these men and will serve them with servile duty, and as much as they can, they will imitate them. Then the people will rejoice in their conversion, for they will seem just to them. And when these confirm the course of their error in this way, they will expel the teachers and wise men who then persist faithfully in the Catholic faith, pursuing

them from everywhere. But not all! for some of them are the strongest soldiers in the justice of God. And they will not be able to move certain congregations of saints whose conduct is holy. Therefore, they will advise the princes and the rich to coerce the same church teachers and other spiritual men, namely their subordinates, with rods and clubs so that they may become just. And in some things, this will be completed! wherefore others will be terrified and tremble. But as it was said to Elijah, many of the just will be preserved, who will not be confused by these errors nor destroyed from their foundations. But these deceivers! at the beginning of their seduction will say to the women: It is not permitted for you to be with us! but because you do not have upright teachers, obey us and do whatever we say and command you! and you will be saved. And in this way, they contract women to themselves and lead them into their error. Hence they will also say in the pride of their swelling mind: We have overcome all. But afterward, they will secretly mingle with these same women in lust! and thus their iniquity and sect will be exposed. But I who am say. Thus I who am say. Thus iniquity which purges iniquity will be brought over you as it is written: He made darkness his hiding place. In his encircling tabernacle! dark waters in the clouds of the air. For God will establish your evil works which are without light for vengeance in which he will hide himself from us without assistance. because he will not cry equity over you. but will say you are unjust. For the law and doctrine are from heaven. in which they ought to have dwelt among you! if you were an ornament of virtues and a fragrant garden of delights. But you are an evil example in the minds of men. since no stream of good fame flows from you. so that you neither have food to eat nor clothing to cover with in the right respect of the soul. but unjust works without good knowledge. Wherefore your honor will perish, and the crown will fall from your head. Thus injustice provokes justice, and seeks and searches out all

scandals! as it is written: Woe, however, to the man! through whom the scandal comes. For it is necessary! that through tribulations and contritions the evil works of men be purged. But yet many tribulations and those are accumulated for those who bring miseries to others in their impiety. But these unfaithful men, seduced by the devil, will be your scourge to chastise you. because you do not purely worship God! and they will torture you for as long as your injustices and iniquities are purged. But these deceivers are not those who will come before the last day when the devil will have flown high to fight against God as he began in the beginning. but they are the forerunners of their seed. But after they are found in the perversities of Baal and other evil deeds, princes and other great ones will rush upon them and kill them like rabid wolves wherever they find them. Then the dawn of justice and your latter days will be better than the former ones. and you will be fearful of all the past. and you will shine like the purest gold! and thus you will endure for long times. For the first dawn of justice will then rise in the spiritual people. as it began at first with a small number! nor do they want to have many possessions or many riches which kill souls. but they will say. Woe to us! because we have sinned. For they will be strengthened in justice by past fear and past sorrow! as the angels were strengthened in the love of God in the fall of the devil. And thus afterward they will live in humility and will not desire to rebel against God with evil deeds. but having been purged from many errors. they will henceforth persist in the strongest power of rectitude. And then many men will marvel. that such a strong storm preceded this gentleness. But the men who were before these times endured many and strong battles against their wills in the dangers of their bodies from which they could not free themselves. but in your times you will have restless wars because of your own wills and uncomposed manners! in which you will suffer many tribulations. Whoever therefore wants to escape these dangers. let him beware

lest he be so darkened in his eyes that he is caught in the nets of these calamities! but let each one flee from them as much as he can by good works and respect for good will. and God will provide his help to him. For the devil made error in the work of God. which he also began in the first man. wherefore he spits out the scum of his vices over the spiritual people! but God will keep the people whom He has chosen for Himself in rectitude. just as He keeps certain men against the last error! so that they may dissipate it. Thus the devil will be confounded in the tail of this error. and like a snake will be hidden in a cave! as he will also be led into confusion in the last error. For God foresaw His works in Adam whom He made from clay, flesh, and bone! when He inspired him with the breath of life. But when the spirit of man departs from him, the flesh and bone turn to ashes. but yet on the last day they will be renewed. But because God made man from clay, He prefigured the old law to be given to man! but that the same man rose from clay into flesh and bone showed the spiritual law which the Son of God brought through Himself. Who will also be renewed after ashes and will be eternal! in which it will be demonstrated that with the reward of holiness and with the reward of the true law he will see the face of the Creator. because he was truly renewed there as it is written. Send forth Your Spirit and they will be created! and You will renew the face of the earth. This is said. You, God who created all things, will send forth Your Spirit in the last trumpet and men will rise in immortality. so that they will not grow or wither from now on. nor will they turn into any decay. And thus You will renew the face of the earth. namely that body and soul will be in one knowledge and in one perfection. This God will do! in whom there is neither beginning nor end. For God looks to nothing! because He is all. And He created man. in whom He placed His works and miracles. and to whom He entrusted every building of virtues through which he may tend to Him which the same God greatly loves! because He is love. For God

does as a head of a household who entrusts his goods to a familiar friend. so that for the good work of these goods he may receive a reward from him. Now O children of God, hear and understand what the Spirit of God says to you! lest you perish from the better part. And the Spirit of God says to you. Look to your city and region. and cast out the nefarious men from among you who are worse than the Jews! and like the Sadducees. For as long as they remain with you. you will not be able to be safe and secure. For the church laments and weeps over the iniquity of these! because its children are contaminated by their iniquity. Therefore cast them out from among you lest your congregation and city perish! for a banquet of royal nuptials was prepared long ago in Cologne. whence its streets still gleam. But I, timid and poor, was very weary for two years. to bring forth these things with a living voice before teachers and doctors and other wise men in certain greater places where they reside! But because the church was divided! I withdrew this voice for the time being.

Letter 269: R269: Provost R. von St. Peter in Trier to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

The prior of Saint Peter and the entire clergy of Trier to Hildegard, a sinner and prior of the major church of Saint Peter, and the entire clergy of Trier to Hildegard, servant of God and conscious of many of His mysteries, living devoutly in the monastery of blessed Robert. With thanksgiving and hands extended to God on your behalf. Since by divine permission the thoughts from many hearts are revealed, our hearts towards you, by divine will, love you with all the effort of our body and with all the devotion of our mind. For we know through the Holy Spirit that He dwells in you and many things unknown to other men are revealed to you through Him. For since you departed from us, when during the days of Pentecost you recently came to us by divine disposition, where you foretold to us the imminent threat of God, we have seen and experienced many losses of churches and many dangers to men around us and among us. Because we neglected to appease the wrath of the Lord according to the good counsel you gave us, and unless by the mercy of God His vengeance had been withdrawn, perhaps succumbing to those same imminent dangers, we would have fallen into despair. And because God is in you and His words sound from your mouth, we earnestly implore your maternal love to send us in writing through the present bearer those things which you then revealed to us by your living voice, so that succeeding posterity may see both the vengeance and mercy of God directed over us, and may know you to be a true and beloved one conscious of His secrets. May the protection of the Lord remain always over you, and may what He began in you be brought to a good end in you.

Letter 270: R270: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to the Clergy von Trier

To the clergy of Trier, from Hildegard.

I, a humble figure who has in me neither health nor strength nor fortitude nor doctrine, but who is subject to teachers, from the mystical light of true vision, have heard these words for the prelates and the clergy of Trier. Doctors and teachers refuse to sound the trumpet of justice; therefore, the rising of good works in them, which illuminates the whole world and is like a mirror of light, is extinguished. For this rising, with the teaching, should shine in them, which would direct various precepts just as the sphere of the sun is diverse. The south wind of virtues with its warmth is also cold in them like winter, because they do not have good works and are not ignited by the fiery Holy Spirit, and because they are without greenery, they are dry. Likewise, the west of mercy has turned into the blackness of sackcloth because by living well, they do not honor the passion of Christ, who descended into humanity through humility and covered His divinity as the sun is sometimes hidden. But the north with the north wind operates in them, where each of them exercises the breadth of his property, which will turn into the punishments of souls, just as the sackcloth constricts the body of man. For they do not rise with good works with the east, nor do they burn with the heat of the sun, nor do they decline from evils with the west, but they hide themselves with the north wind in the propriety of their hearts. For this reason, indeed, the devil sends forth three black winds from the north with a ludicrous hiss: the first with pride and hatred against the east, which is extinguished; the second with forgetfulness of God against the south; the third with infidelity against the west. For when doctors and teachers rightly walked, imitating God, the east so constrained the north wind in them that it could not breathe, and the south in good works burned it in them,

and the west cast down its powers into darkness when they left the world and themselves following the Lamb. But now the virile strength of fortitude is inclined into feminine weakness, which should not fight with virile fortitude, because the man is the head. This time is truly feminine, which began with a certain tyrant, when all evil arose. However, I have learned from true vision that many times any head of a family who is a powerful lord, presents his probity and power and possibility to his sons and servants who displease him because of the transgression of his precepts, and then, extending his hand with the rod of correction, bends and dissipates them according to the quality of their sin, saying, "Where do you come from, and what are you without me?" And from the zeal of the Lord, I have heard that God does not let the transgression of His precepts go without punishment. For Adam, having transgressed God's precepts, lost the vision of celestial things and the bright garment and was sent into a place of misery. Through the zeal of the Lord, Cain was expelled because of the shedding of the blood of his brother, whom he killed. Many peoples also arose from the sons of Adam who had the forgetfulness of God, so that they did not know that they were men, and thus, sinning disgracefully, they lived according to the manners of beasts, except for the sons of God, who separated themselves from these men and their ways, from whom Noah was born. Then the zeal of the Lord was raised, and the spirit of the Lord moved over the waters and split the clouds, and brought forth the waters in the flood, and thus the earth was cleansed of criminal sins and the blood of Abel which it had drunk. For God did these things. And thus, the neck of the greed of the ancient serpent was terrified. Then the earth, which had previously been violated in the blood of Abel, brought forth the new juice of wine, and wisdom began to work again. But the devil with ridicule perpetrated a crime in the son of Noah, wherefore the zeal of the Lord gave the sinner into servitude and withdrew the blessing from him and handed the

sinner over into the curse of servitude. And thus new wisdom worked in heaven and on earth. Then the Holy Trinity showed a great work in Abraham, prefiguring and showing obedience where he left his country and where he circumcised himself, and marked those in obedience of whom it was said, "Who are these who fly like clouds," and in circumcision, the wound of the confusion of the ancient serpent. But the woman, following the laughter of the foolishness of the first woman, in her fertility the Son of God was prefigured. For in the obedience of Abraham, God changed the transgression of Adam and inflicted a wound upon death in his circumcision, and in the fertility of a barren woman foresaw that another woman would bear another son, since the Son of God fulfilled all this prefiguration in His birth.

Moses the lawgiver came as an aid to circumcision and gave the law, which was also done by God. But that people, because of many transgressions of the precepts of God, fell into idolatry and other sins. The zeal of the Lord will operate such purgations until the end of the world. However, when God sends His vengeance, He often announces it through a man or some other creature, so that men may have no excuse for their evils. Therefore, often many among them arise and do penance, as happened with Jonah. And thus God is praised by His friends and proclaimed by His enemies. For God often touched the form of His finger in men and women with the aforementioned vision, as it is written: "And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy."

After God prefigured what He wanted to do, He remembered what He had said about crushing the head of the serpent. And He filled a certain woman, namely a virgin, with obedience and chastity and all good things, so that the pride which was in Eve dried up in her. This virgin conceived the Son of God by the Holy Spirit, who proceeded miraculously and came into the world with miracles. Then God ceased from that work which He had done carnally. And He gave to

this Son of His the power to turn all things carnal to spiritual, because He is the flesh of holiness which proceeded through another nature and which the counsel of the serpent never violated.

Wherefore the same Son of God irrigated the old law, when in baptism through faith and obedience and through abstinence from carnal desires He showed the way of holiness, and when He gave penance to men, and confirmed all these things in His mortal body with His death, and when He gave miracles and signs to His disciples as the Father had given to Him. For because God appeared as a man, with the thunder of divinity, He sent a new fire into His disciples, which had never appeared before, and the disciples were infused with new fiery tongues and new knowledge, which taught men to live according to celestial harmony.

Then the east shone in its strength, and the south burned in its warmth, nor was the west noxious, nor did the north with its north wind rage, because they were tempered by the passion of Christ until a certain tyrant arose, from whose time all evil and injustice and transgression began. But these were examined with famine and pestilence, and bent with wars and battles, and purged with the penalties of penance. Now, however, the law is neglected in the spiritual people, who despise to do and to teach good things. Masters and prelates also, having abandoned justice, sleep in justice.

Therefore, I heard this voice from heaven saying, "O daughter of Zion, the crown from your head will be inclined, and the cloak of the expansion of your riches will be diminished and confined to a small number, and you will be expelled from region to region. For many cities and cloisters will be destroyed by powerful men. And the princes will say, 'Let us remove this iniquity, which has subverted the whole world in them.'"

And I saw and heard that these dangers and destructions will occur in regions and cloisters because of the transgression of obedience and other precepts of legal constitutions. And I saw that in these

transgressions, however, some will adhere to God and long for Him, just as it happened in the time of Elijah. These will persist with great honor and will be considered as holocausts of God, because they have turned away from evils like Noah and Lot. And this same purgation will begin in a small way in this feminine time and then become greater, and then a virile time will come, in which there will be wars and battles from the just judgment of God. But this feminine time will not last as long as it has persisted until now. Then the justices and judgments of God will arise, and discipline and fear of God will be in the people, and just and good men will be made in the spiritual people. However, they will remain in small numbers because of their humility and will return to the first dawn like hermits, and they will do this also in fear of past times, which they perceived to have been adverse to them.

And men will not have the foolishness of lascivious manners as before, like children, but they will bear the sadness of unknown times that are to come. And then strong men will arise and prophesy, and they will collect all the old and new scriptures and all the words poured out by the Holy Spirit and adorn their understanding like a necklace with precious stones. Through these and other wise men, many secular people will become good and live holy lives. This pursuit of holiness will not wither quickly but will last a long time, because all these things will happen because of an erring time, where many martyrs will be in faith. For the warrior man will do this, who sees the beginning and end of his works in these, so that he may resist the erring people in this.

He indeed first established prophets as the head, wise men as the eyes, and teachers as the mouth, just as through the Word of God all things were made. And because the remaining members, that is, the faithful, will do good works as it is said, God places the head upon them, that is, He will open prophecy to their understanding. Then princes will turn their harps and drums into distress and sorrow, as

the children of Israel did when they were captive. After all these things, the spiritual will be strengthened without weariness and deficiency, and men will look upon the pupil of the living book. And then strength and fortitude and health will be in the people, because the warrior man will fill the air with health, and will also produce the greenery of virtues, so that the faithful do not fail in body and soul in the erring time.

This will last until the erring time, in which the faithful people will hasten to death as to a feast. But this time will hold this error in such a way until God, in His grace and mercy and zeal, dispels it. In all these things, the gardener will throw out the useless things from his garden and gather the useful to himself, as it is written: "The Lord of vengeance, the God of vengeance, has acted freely." Which means: God in His zeal crushes the head of all iniquity, and the Lord casts it down in its fall, because all iniquity is from the devil who is buried in hell. For He is indeed the God of vengeance because He did not look to or regard anyone from whom He could receive anything to add to Himself, but distributed, constituted, and made everything within Himself. And He acted freely in this way because He alone is just and good and to be feared in all His judgments. For God is indeed in the vengeance of the lost because they did not want good things, and therefore He condemns them with the devil. He also freely inclines many through pain, whom He then freely elevates again, so that they may be like pillars of heaven because of their good works, just as He made many saints from publicans and sinners. Then the devil, raising himself up, wants to fly on the wings of the winds in his lost son. But God disposes within Himself what He wants, because no one can overcome Him, and He dissipates all the power of the devil as a craftsman who reduces all useless things in his workshop to nothing and extends his hand in his zeal, as He did there when He cast the same Satan into the abyss in the first fall. Wherefore he, like a snake entering its hole, hides himself in the

abyss and will no longer raise himself up because now he is completely deceived.

Afterwards, divinity, unknown to all creation, will work, because it is unknown to every man when the purgation of the world by fire will take place. And I saw Trier adorned with the new fire which appeared to the disciples in fiery tongues among the faithful, so that all its streets were then spread with golden faith with miracles. But now, through the wandering of foul manners, it is surrounded with weariness as if it knows not God and is defiled with many other evils. And in these things, it is wearied and decayed in the joy and beauty of principal and honest institutions and is inclined to the oblivion of many sins. Therefore, fiery vengeance will come upon it from its enemies unless it is blotted out through penance as happened with Jonah.

Letter 271: R271: Dean T. von St. Aposteln in Köln to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Dean of the Church of the Holy Apostles. I, master of the schools, to Hildegard.

By the grace of God, dean of the church of the holy apostles which is in Cologne, called the dean, I, the master of the schools, with all the brothers of the same church, to lady Hildegard and all those fighting for Christ on Mount Saint Robert, devoted prayer in the Lord and true salvation. From the day it became known to us that you accepted our special sister, rather daughter, lady Sigevviza, into the fellowship of your blessedness, not only we, but indeed the entire city of Cologne, inflamed by the nod of God with the love of piety. Hence it is now openly proclaimed throughout all the boundaries of our land by all: Behold the fragrance of the ladies of Saint Robert, like the fragrance of a full field which the Lord has blessed. Therefore, be blessed by the Lord, you who in your small and humble little mount have performed works of piety, which all the heights of mountains and all the breadths of our valleys, we do not say could not celebrate, but neglected to. For we have heard recently, with the report spreading, that that ancient enemy has been driven out by your prayers. If this is so, we beseech you to inform us by writing of the manner and order of the expulsion, so that we may rejoice with you and praise the Lord together with perpetual devotion. We also greet lady Sigevviza, whom we know more intimately, more specially, renewing the promised devoted prayers in Christ and expecting the same from her. Farewell.

Letter 272: R272: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Dean T. von St. Aposteln in Köln

From Hildegard.

God accomplished His work, but did not establish it in one way. For Adam perished, as he did not complete the course of his cycle, but was sought after midday. However, God sent His breath into the prophets so that they might announce the truth, and thus wisdom spoke through the mouths of those whom He appointed, so that they might bring forth miracles. The apostles also, through the Holy Spirit, perfected the work of God in faith, and their martyrdom and that of others revealed God. The Holy Spirit also inspired spiritual peoples, who bring the world to an end within themselves and honor the angelic order. Thus, the work of God is like a day. For all said the same thing, but each individually proclaimed it. Indeed, in the rise of the day, the dawn precedes the sun, and in the morning the rays of the sun shine, which in the third hour begin to burn in their warmth. At midday, they burn fully in their heat, and around the ninth hour, they incline in their warmth. However, around evening, they end the heat they had during the day and hide themselves before night, and thus the day is completed and rests from its works. If these were completed in one way, they would displease man. Therefore, God is also named Sabaoth, because each of this kind of course has its full duty. In this way, God operates in all His works.

Thus also, in this woman about whom you inquire, the same was accomplished. For her, both the high and the higher, the small and the lesser, with labors and prayers, said the same thing and each individually proclaimed it, as the Holy Spirit taught them this duty. For some labored for her through sighs of mercy, some through prayers and vigils, and some also endured fasting and mortification in their bodies. Many also gave alms for her, and a great crowd, with the help of whatever good they could do, inclined towards her, and

some completed this with great zeal without weariness. And so all looked to God for her, just as the day completes its cycle.

Now, let us say together with praise: glory to you, Lord. May the blessing of God in His grace be upon you and upon all who were moved with mercy for her, for the Lord Himself said, "I desire mercy, not sacrifice."

Letter 273: R273: Mefried von Eberbach to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Meffridus, prior in Eberbach. To Hildegard, chosen by God, beloved of God, venerable lady! Meffridus, prior, and the entire congregation of brothers in Eberbach wish you to enjoy the eternal delights in the chamber of the highest King. We have often heard of the most worthy, fragrant, and sweet-smelling reputation of your sanctity, and we, unworthy and insignificant, have rejoiced with ineffable spiritual joy because of it. For by the grace and mercy of Almighty God, such marvelous gifts of His generosity have been bestowed upon you. It is clearer than light that the Lord loves you among those who love Him because you are so worthy, so pleasing, so lovable, so venerable to all those in whom He dwells, that no one doubts He is in you and remains with you.

To whom such great benefits of virtues have been granted, we do not doubt that the gifts of holy piety also reside in you, and that the bowels of holy charity and holy compassion are not lacking. Therefore, we humbly beseech the generosity of your piety, that since the Lord was born of the flesh of the Blessed Mary, ever Virgin, for the redemption and salvation of sinners, for the love of our Lord, our Almighty Creator, and most merciful Redeemer, have mercy on us. Deign to make us partakers of your prayers. Moreover, we earnestly ask that you kindly not hesitate to send us the letters which we have heard you wrote by the Holy Spirit about seculars and simpletons converted to spiritual life, whom we call conversi. That we may see the marvelous works of God and His will in them, and as much as we can, follow and fulfill them with all our desire for good works. Farewell.

Letter 274: R274: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Cistercians

To the Grey Monks, from Hildegard.

I, a poor little one, lying in the bed of sickness for more than two years, saw these things and heard a voice from heaven speaking to me thus: "To the spiritual people whom God has foreknown with miracles of prophecy according to His pleasure, write what you see and hear!" Thus it begins: God has prefigured certain virtuous works which He has accomplished in His saints and elect through the four living creatures of God's mysteries. For He reveals His hidden mysteries to man through these creatures and through other miracles, just as He showed the prophet Ezekiel and His beloved John through these creatures that He wished to separate and gather a spiritual people from the common people.

John indeed says, "In the midst of the throne and around the throne were four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind." This means, in the power of God's might, who is both God and man, and in every place where His power extends, the faithful imbued with the teachings of the four evangelists, meditating on God's precepts and possessing the fullness of virtue's circumspection, must be, so that they see where they have come from and what they will be in the future. For God is fire, and His angels often announce His miracles to men, and the marvelous spirits of His throne burn and shine before His face, and they burn in His love so that they desire nothing but what He wills. Of these it is said, "You make your angels spirits and your ministers a burning fire." This means, Almighty, you are the one who makes your messengers, namely those who are sent by you for the salvation of men, to be spirits, for when they cease from their mission, they are in your unfailing presence and life. And again, they are spirits when they become messengers to fulfill your commands.

Angels are indeed messengers because they announce to God every inspiration of that breath which God has sent into man. In this way, they are officials for men because they collect and discern their works, and because of the works of men which are performed through the spirit, they are also called spirits. And they are angels because they are often sent by the supreme ruler to carry out His judgments. But you make your ministers, who serve your will everywhere, a burning fire when they burn in your love. In this ardor, they serve you again with tireless praise. The ministers of God who always look upon His face shine like flames and in that brilliance see His miracles, and in wonder and praise recognize them. Therefore, they are also a burning fire and burn through God who is fire, and cannot be ignited or extinguished by another, but burn unquenchably in His love because He, clothed in the mantle of humanity, always leads them to admire His miracles.

For God has girded Himself with the mantle of His strength by which He made man a mirror of His honor and His miracles, so that man might fight against and overcome the devil, and thus always persist in divine praise. In the same way, God makes those who are His messengers to proclaim words of salvation to the children of the Church as spirits when He commands them to resist the flesh and serve the spirit. Those who are thus made spiritual with all their heart, He then commands with even greater confidence to reveal His precepts to His people. He also makes those who serve Him day and night in labors burn in His love and thus be a burning fire, and so being made fire, they again sweat in His service without weariness.

For in His foreknowledge, God had preordained that the miracles and His hidden things which are in the angels would also be accomplished in men through signs. Hence, He also made angels speak to men, as happened with Abraham and Jacob. Just as the donkey spoke to Balaam, so He made the angelic spirits who serve Him, praising and honoring His face, be covered with His hidden

things as with a garment. Therefore, they are also called burning fire.

By these fiery ministers, who are covered with God's secrets as with a garment, hermits are signified, who, denying themselves, live as though they were not men and flee the companionship of men. For God, through His work which is man, accomplishes great miracles, which He predestined in the angelic spirits and which shine before Him with praise and marvelous honor.

And as it is said, in the circuit of the throne are shown the four living creatures full of eyes in front and behind. These are all the holy works that God accomplishes in these men who look to Him and to His throne with faith in the east, with hope in the south, with remembrance of the fall that occurred in the first parent in the west, and with foresight of the future, directing their eyes to the north, so that the warrior of the north, with the falling disease of pride and the burning flame of incest, does not cause them to fall. With these eyes, which they have everywhere, they must yearn for God so that they are not extinguished from the faith, nor separated from the light, nor approach the north so closely as to be suffocated by eternal death. This is as if in the circuit of the throne, for the east, south, and west show God, but the north is entirely subdued by Him, made a footstool at His feet.

And then it is written, "The first creature was like a lion, the second creature like a calf, the third creature had a face like a man, and the fourth creature was like a flying eagle." This means: The first creature signifies those cloistered men who first withdrew from the world with the strength of a lion. Hence, they are also likened to those fiery ones who are covered with God's secrets as with a garment and who always look upon God's face. For their garment is not from the world but wonderfully from God, as He ordained in those who first demonstrated and taught it. For their cowl was

prefigured by the angelic spirits who look upon God's face and not elsewhere, and its breadth extends like a cloud, for angels have often been seen in clouds, and the garment of innocence of Adam was like a bright cloud.

These men, therefore, cover their heads with the cowl, so that not turning to the left or right, they may walk upright before them in the impetus of the spirit, always looking to God so that they do not turn back from good works.

All these things should be done in obedience, which the Son of Man showed through Himself, so that the precepts of the teachers may be observed with the fear of God. Thus, just as a man fears to perish from the voice of thunder, so too should he fear sin. For as the lion excels all other beasts in strength, so do these people, in the mighty power of divinity, excel other men, because although they are human, they do not live as other men. When a man renounces the world, offering himself to God, he condemns the world so that it becomes useless to him in all things, and thus he elevates his mind, as Daniel says, "I was looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven, one like a son of man was coming, and he came up to the Ancient of Days."

This means, when I raised my mind to the heavenly things, I looked in the consideration of many adversities that all the heavenly and divine miracles which God worked in the angelic spirits, He prefigured in men through His Son. And thus the same Son reached the Ancient of Days, because the Son of God is both God and man, and so God and man are one God. For God is man, and this man is God. But also, the good works of men and the praises of angels are joined together and are one in God.

To these cloistered men, a multitude of virgins is associated, who abandon their love for men and riches, and the whole world. For just as a virgin should be taken away from the delights of this world so

as not to suckle at the breasts of pleasure, so too should the cloistered multitude be separated from the world so as not to engage in any secular offices with it. And just as a virgin is left by the man so that she is not under his care and power, but is free from him, so too should a monk, having left the world, not be subjected to it but remain free from it.

Virginity also signifies the sun, which illuminates the whole world, because God joined virginity to Himself, who, having left man, bore Him whom the radiance of divinity filled, who rules all things. For the King who rules all things is God, and virginity is joined to Him when God and man were born of a virgin. Thus, the queen stood at His right hand in gold-embroidered clothing, surrounded by variety, because virginity, contending against the devil, stood with the virtue of divinity in shining work, encompassed everywhere by a multitude of various virtues.

Indeed, divinity espoused virginity to itself when the first angel fell to the left, and then also chose the people of salvation in Adam for itself, whom it called its right hand. From this people, it joined virginity to itself, which brought forth the greatest work. For just as God created all things through His Word, so too did virginity, through the warmth of holy divinity, bear the Son of God. Thus, virginity is not without fruitfulness, for the virgin bore God and man through whom all things are. But in this way, all the virtues of the Old and New Testaments, which God worked in His saints, are decorated as with a garment adorned with gold, and the virgin freely gathers them to herself, for the bond of man does not constrain her.

The wheel that Ezekiel saw also signifies virginity, because the same virginity was prefigured in the law before the incarnation of the Son of God. After His incarnation, it wonderfully performed many miracles, for through it God purified all sins and rightly ordered each institution. Virginity indeed sustains the old and supports the

new and is the root and foundation of all good things, for it was always and forever with Him who is without beginning and without end. For the nature of man, which was lost because of sins, revived in salvation through her, when she took away sins from men through a foreign nature.

The second living creature, like a calf, shows those in clerical habit attending to divine sacrifice, namely those who dig around the vineyard of the Lord of hosts and plow the field of God's precepts everywhere! And also those who are called the angels of the Lord's army, who must therefore gird themselves with the belt of chastity so as not to fall into the vanity of carnal pleasures, but to plow the field vigorously with the plow. They will also have the circumcision of sobriety, for through them the sins of men are washed away, and this will be done in mercy because they feel the sins in themselves.

These two aforementioned kinds of men, those designated by the lion and the calf, draw to themselves another kind of men whom they call conversi. Many of these do not turn to God in their ways because they love contrariness rather than rectitude, and they perform their works with the sound of temerity, saying of their superiors: "Who are they, and what are they? And what were we, and what are we now?" And because they act thus, they are like false prophets, and because they do not rightly judge how God has established His people. Therefore, you who fear God, listen to the Spirit of the Lord speaking to you. Remove these aforementioned evils from yourselves and purify yourselves before the days of those tribulations when the enemies of God and yours will pursue you, and turn to the right place of humility and poverty so that you no longer remain in such breadth as you have been until now! Just as God changed the old law from its custom to a spiritual life and purified each former institution for more useful ones.

In the first rise, God granted Adam to cultivate the earth, Abel to sacrifice, Noah to build, and this continued until the high priesthood which arose in the incarnation of Christ, which Abraham prefigured through circumcision, and Moses through the giving of the law. But all these things the same Son of God later perfected in His humanity. Hence they must be understood with regard to man. After Adam's fall, God rightly prefigured His order both in men and in angels. It would not be proper for a priest to perform the duties of a farmer or a disciple to perform the duties of a master when the farmer should imitate the priest and the disciple should imitate the master in the fear of God and humble patience.

For Almighty God is known in His works, as He began to work in Adam, to whom He gave the earth to cultivate and to procreate men, because He Himself created all things, and as He prefigured through Abel that His Son would be sacrificed for the redemption of the people, and as He prefigured through Noah, who built the ark, that teachers would be established in the spiritual people. Now you masters should correct and improve these aforementioned men, namely the conversi in your order, because many of them neither work by day nor by night, for they serve neither God nor the world perfectly. Awaken them from this ignorance, like a good gardener cleanses his garden of useless herbs. In yourselves, however, foresee according to your order and understand rightly so that you do not judge unjustly.

It would be inappropriate for the lion, the calf, the man, and the eagle to be contrary to each other in their significations, but each should render justice to the other in the figure of truth. For the sun, along with the moon and the stars, illuminates the whole world well and in order. Hence those who are marked by the Son of Man for the healing of men can heal, anoint, and sanctify baptism with humble obedience.

For every priest who is anointed by God and named priest will be able to anoint and heal the wounds of sinners with just judgment, for he has this office from God, and thus he should not neglect to fulfill it. And I, a poor and unlearned woman, saw a certain beast whose face and front feet were like a bear's, and whose remaining body showed the likeness of an ox, except that its hind feet were like those of a donkey, and it lacked a tail. It had three horns on its head, of which two, resembling the horns of an ox, were near its ears, while the third, in the middle of its forehead, resembled the horn of a goat. The face of this beast faced east, while its hind part was turned west. This is to be understood as follows:

This beast, whose face and front feet are like a bear's, shows certain men who secretly have bestial morals, who indeed utter gentle words but, in the examples of their footsteps where they should walk forward in righteousness, demonstrate recklessness and the hardness of perversity. Its remaining body shows the likeness of an ox, except that its hind feet are like those of a donkey and it lacks a tail, because these same men simulate bearing the yoke of God like an ox, but in their subsequent examples, they manifest the morals of a donkey that collapses under its burden. Nor do they show that they have a tail, for in them is lacking what the Lord commands: to offer the sacrifice with a tail, that is, because the good they began in humility and poverty, they do not bring to the end of beatitude.

The three horns on its head, of which two, resembling the horns of an ox, are near its ears, represent three ways of life standing in principal commerce among men. The two simulate the image of those working in the Lord's field and attending to the word of the Lord, while the third, in the middle of the forehead, resembles the horn of a goat, because it manifests these spiritual men in the strength of their confidence, who, in the squalor of the goat, strive to ascend to a height in which they can in no way remain. In this height, they despise other people like Pharisees spurn publicans and

look down on them as useless. They even attach themselves to certain official causes of regions so that through them they may be considered better and more excellent by the other two horns, and thus appear to ascend to the height of sanctity.

For they involve themselves in secular concerns and accumulate multiple wealth, as if they overturn the whole earth with their labors, and by this, they capture more breadth of riches than they should. They do this in the manner of the young man to whom the Son of God said that he should sell whatever he had and give to the poor, and he went away sorrowful because he wanted to have both worldly riches and eternal life, which was difficult to achieve. For these men wish to have both heaven and earth simultaneously, which is impossible, because they cannot stand in the possession of wealth without the pride of exaltation and without the proprietary pleasure, just as it would be impossible for a man to stand at the summit of a mountain peak and not fall when struck by the storm of a strong wind.

They do not have the love and fear that the needy have, who extend their hand for help and alms, but they involve themselves in the foolishness of a donkey, who allows itself to be loaded with heavy burdens until it collapses under the same burden, for they wish to bear both the yoke of spiritual life and the concern of the world, but they cannot stand in it, and therefore they fall like a donkey. Hence, the face of this beast is turned east, but its hind part is turned west, because while they seem to attend to the spiritual life, they also adhere to secular matters, imitating the lost angels who, trusting in themselves, fell from heavenly glory.

The third creature, having the face of a man, signifies these secular men who carry out their works with the concern of body and soul, and yet with good intention ascend to God as if with wings, because all good desires, like the rays of the sun, emanate from the heart of

the just, hence they appear as if winged. They also run to observe the precepts of the law and the priest and are moved to give alms in mercy. They look to the earth to see how they grow in it and, in the begetting of offspring, consider themselves equal to the dust of the earth and call themselves sinners, and thus in secular life, they have more pain than the pleasure of carnal joy. And so they come to their teachers, namely the priests, changing their face with which they tasted sins, and through the grace of the Holy Spirit, confessing their sins in penance, and thus they are renewed, as it is written, "You will renew the face."

As it is said: O God, in a new spirit, You will renew the will of man who was inclined to sin, so that You will turn him from evil pursuits to good desires. For by penitents, You will renew the face of the earth, when man feels and knows himself so entangled in sins that he cannot contain himself from sinning, yet turns to renewal through penance. If man did not sin, he would not be renewed. Some are also renewed in another way, namely when they avoid sins due to the punishment of penance, so that they do not seek to sin. Others, in a different manner, avoid the sins they feel within themselves and could commit, out of love for virtues, and thus receive renewal through the Holy Spirit.

Just as the earth in the time of greenness does not fail to bring forth fruit, and in dry times withers and dries up, and then again returns to its greenness, so too has God made man to be renewed in his works within himself. For Scripture must be rightly divided in all the works of man, just as many waters are divided from one water, as God divided the waters across the whole earth. These secular men always examine and consider themselves—what they are, how they live, and how they can remove their sins. Living in this manner, with the fear of God, they are on earth but do not neglect heavenly things. For they offer themselves to God when they adore Him, so that they shine like the moon when they sigh from their innermost hearts to

Him. But when they fail in sins like the moon, they immediately rise again through penance, just as the moon rises again through the sun after its eclipse.

They also sleep among the middle clerics with wings of a dove covered in silver, for when they sleep to avoid sinning, they are among teachers who fly in the simplicity of pure knowledge, doing this when they turn away from initiated sins and rest with them, as the head inclines to rest between the middle wings. Loving heavenly things and confessing their sins through penance in earthly matters, they are blessed, for they die in the Lord. Though living secularly according to the law, a great miracle is in them for living thus and abandoning sins through the bitterness of penance.

These men will be like the beast with the face of a man, for when they sin in earthly matters, they oppose them through penance and become alien to them, as the nature of animals is alien to the nature of man. Therefore, in the knowledge of good works, they appear as silvered, having the simple manners of an infant who does not know sin, not wanting to embrace or nurture sin. Striving to shine in this simplicity, their backsides appear golden, because their past in which they were strong in sins now shows wisdom in the fear of the Lord, shining in good deeds.

The fourth creature, like a flying eagle, shows some men who abstain from sins, who rise from these secular ones to continence, as happened in Mary Magdalene, who cast away all her sins, counting them as mud, and chose the best part, sitting in the dawn of sanctity. In the Old Testament, many abandoned sins due to the weariness of this world, and many also abstained from sins out of love for righteousness. Now, however, in the new sun, that is, in Christ Jesus, they are called continent, for they turn to the simplicity of an infant who does not know sins, repudiating and not knowing them in their will.

In two ways, they ascend to heavenly things, for with good intention and holy desire, they love what is above all else, unlike those who did not know the world before. Like an eagle that seeks higher places above other birds, they fly upwards, transforming into the brightness of eternal life, which they cannot be sated with. Through the fervor of the true sun, they trample on what they once did when entangled in sins. In the mighty power of holiness, they consider the great pains and heavy burdens in sins, which they had previously touched by feeling, and now kill them in themselves as a deadly corpse, binding and pursuing their body as a slain sheep. Thus, they look to the burning sun, casting away all secular things they knew before, counting them as dust, and in the burning love of God, spurning the fear of hell, they trust to persevere in faith and hope.

In this way, they act as Isaiah says: "For the seraphim with two wings covered His face," which wings signify faith and hope, because in faith, the faithful see God, and through hope, they desire eternal rewards. With two wings, they covered His feet, representing sensuality and understanding, by which these same men cover the nakedness of their sins, so they do not fulfill the carnal desires of their own will. With the other two wings, they flew, showing the love of God and neighbor, for when they love God above all, they assist their neighbor in their needs, and thus they fly above all in the strength of God, transcending all earthly things, examining each matter in sins diligently to afflict themselves through abstinence from sins.

Thus, in full desire, they adorn the heavenly Jerusalem with precious stones of good works. They do not sleep in the joyful life of God's precepts but always sound like a singing trumpet in the newness of the soul's desire, which are the burning sighs they have in the night darkness of being born in sins, when they recognize God in fear and love, saying that He is holy, who created all things, and holy, who was never mortal, and holy, who broke hell and led out His chosen

ones. Blessed are those who, by doing good and praising God, never cease, and when they cease working, after the end of their life, they do not desist from praising their Creator.

I, however, poor from my infancy, weak and infirm, was compelled in a mystical and true vision to write this, and I composed it lying in a severe illness on my bed, commanded and helped by God, so that I might present it to the prelates and teachers who are marked for the service of God, so that they might consider in it as in a mirror who and what they are, and also show and reveal it to those who are subject to them in obedience. And I heard a voice from heaven saying: "Let no one despise these words, lest the vengeance of God fall upon him if he despises them."

Letter 275: R275: Werner von Kirchheim to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Vverner of the church of Kircheim, along with the other brothers of his society, to Hildegard, virgin in mind and body, immaculate and dedicated to God from infancy. Vverner of Kircheim, with the other brothers of his society, offering their unworthy service to God in their parishes! With the example of suppressing hostile armies with God as their guide. Because the fragrance of your virtues has spread over not a small extent of lands, for you not only perform good works but also prophesy future events, contemplate heavenly things, and the grace of the Holy Spirit has illuminated your pure heart, we have deemed it fitting, although unworthy, to commit ourselves to your sanctity by means of fraternity. And certainly, because we believe that we, although the last members of Christ, are with you, we confidently say that whatever we ask of you in his name, you should not deny to those who ask, provided you can grant it. We therefore beseech your kindness, mother and bride of the Lamb, to remember us more diligently in your prayers. Certain that whatever we can obtain from God through you, we will always remember you in our prayers. Furthermore, we presume to make one more request of you: that the words which the Holy Spirit, teaching you, revealed to us and many others present in Kircheim about the negligence of priests in the divine sacrifice, you kindly write and send to us with motherly affection, so that they do not slip from our memory but we may keep them attentively before our eyes. For, as we indulge more than necessary in earthly and secular matters, we often carelessly utter transitory words to the wind. May maternal love prevail in you.

Letter 276: R276: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Werner von Kirchheim

Hildegard.

While lying long in bed with illness in the year of the Lord's incarnation one thousand one hundred and seventieth, I saw, awake in body and mind, a most beautiful image having a female form, who was very select in sweetness and very dear in delights, of such great beauty that no human mind could possibly comprehend her, and whose stature reached from the earth to the heavens. Her face also shone with the greatest brightness, and her eyes looked up to heaven. She was clothed in a very white garment made of white silk, and she was surrounded by a cloak adorned with the most precious stones, namely emerald, sapphire, pearls, and gems, and she wore shoes made of onyx on her feet. But her face was sprinkled with dust, and her garment was torn on the right side, and her cloak had lost its elegant beauty, and her shoes were blackened above. And she cried out with a great and mournful voice to the height of heaven, saying, "Hear, heaven, that my face is soiled, and lament, earth, that my garment is torn, and tremble, abyss, that my shoes are blackened. Foxes have dens, and the birds of the air have nests, but I have no helper or comforter, nor staff upon which I may lean and from which I may be supported." And again she said, "I lay hidden in the heart of the Father until the Son of Man, who was conceived and born in virginity, shed his blood, and with that blood he also betrothed and endowed me to himself, so that in the pure and simple regeneration of spirit and water, I might regenerate those ensnared and contaminated by the serpent's foam. But my nourishers, namely priests, who ought to make my face redden like the dawn, and my garment shine like lightning, and my cloak radiate like precious stones, and my shoes gleam with whiteness, have sprinkled my face with dust, and have torn my garment. They have darkened my cloak,

and blackened my shoes above! And those who should have adorned me everywhere have forsaken me in all these things. For they soil my face by treating the body and blood of my spouse with great impurity, through the licentiousness of their habits and the great filthiness of fornications and adulteries, and the worst robbery of greed, selling and buying what is improper, and they engage and receive these things with such filth, just as if a child were placed in the mud before pigs. For as man, when God made him from the clay of the earth and breathed into his face the breath of life, immediately became flesh and blood, so also by the same power of God, the offering of bread, wine, and water on the altar, at the words of the priest invoking divinity, is transformed into the true flesh and blood of Christ, my spouse! But because of this blindness with which man was blinded in the fall of Adam, man cannot see with carnal eyes. For the wounds of my spouse are fresh and open as long as the wounds of men's sins are open. These same wounds of Christ, the priests who ought to make me white and serve me in whiteness, contaminate with their excessive greed, running from church to church. They also tear my garment by being transgressors of the law and the gospel, and of their priesthood, and they obscure my cloak by neglecting the precepts instituted for them in all things. They do not fulfill them in abstinence, like in emerald, nor in the giving of alms, like in sapphire, nor in other good and just works by which God is honored like other kinds of gems, with good will and perfect work. But they blacken my shoes above because they neither follow the right paths of justice, nor the hard and rough paths of justice, nor do they provide good examples to their subjects. Although beneath in my shoes, as in my secret, I have some whiteness of truth. For false priests are deceived in themselves because they want to have the honor of the priestly office without the work, which cannot be. For no one will receive wages without the labor of the work. Where the grace of God touches a man, it makes him work so that he may

receive the reward. Therefore, let heaven rain various pains that are contrary to men, in the vengeance of God, and cover the whole earth with a cloud so that its greenery withers, and its ornaments become dark. The abyss also trembles, for in vengeance and pain, it will be stirred to fury with heaven and earth. For princes and the rash people will rush upon you, O priests, who have hitherto neglected me, and they will cast you out and drive you away, and take your riches from you, because you did not consider the time of your priestly office. And they will say of you, 'Let us cast out these adulterers and robbers and full of all evil from the church.' And in doing this, they will think they have shown service to God because they say the church has been polluted by you. Therefore, the scripture says, 'Why do the nations rage, and the peoples meditate vain things? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together.' For by God's permission, many nations will begin to rage against you in their judgments, and many peoples will meditate vain things about you, as they will consider your priestly office and consecration as nothing. Kings of the earth will assist in your overthrow with earthly matters, and princes who will rule over you will convene in this one counsel so that they may expel you from their territories because you have driven away the innocent lamb through your worst works. And I heard a voice from heaven saying, 'This image shows the church. Therefore, you, man, who see and hear these lamentable words, proclaim them to the priests who are appointed and ordained to rule and teach the people of God, to whom it was said with the apostles, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." For when God created man, he marked every creature in him, just as in a small piece of parchment, the time and number of the whole year is described. And therefore, God called man every creature.' And again, I, a poor little woman, saw a sword drawn, hanging in the air, one edge of which was turned to heaven, the other to the earth. And this sword was extended over the spiritual people,

which the prophet once foresaw when he said with wonder, ‘Who are these who fly like clouds, and like doves to their windows?’ For these who were elevated from the earth and separated from the common people ought to live holy and be in the simplicity of doves in their habits and works, but now they are depraved in their habits and works. And I saw that this sword was cutting off certain places of the spiritual men, just as Jerusalem was cut off after the passion of the Lord. But I also saw that God would preserve many fearful, pure, and simple priests for himself in this adversity, as he answered Elijah when he said that he had left himself in Israel seven thousand knees of all who had not bowed to Baal. Now, however, the inextinguishable fire of the Holy Spirit infuses into you so that you may turn to the better part.

Letter 277: R277: Convent von Hane to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Brothers in Hane to Hildegard.

To Hildegard, the chaste dove hiding in the clefts of the rock. The brothers, alas, troubled in Hane, commend the devotion of their prayers and that which pertains to eternal salvation. For the grace of God shines your light healthily before men, we glorify your Father who placed you as a burning lamp for the illumination of the Church. And although we are sinners, we nevertheless heartily rejoice in your sanctity, by which you adhere to the embraces of the heavenly bridegroom with singular privilege. We also do not wish to hide from your charity that day and night we long to see you face to face! And constantly keeping your memory in our prayers, we sometimes embrace you in mind as though you were present, though absent in body. Therefore, we humbly implore your perfection, that you, under whose shadow you securely rest, commend us to your spouse, so that as we beg by the way, the passing crowd may not stifle our cries! But drawn by your prayers to the Lord, we may merit to be illuminated from the blindness of our hearts. We say this, moreover, so that you may not omit to quell and root out the discord that you know has arisen in our place, as you have begun, taught by the Holy Spirit. And also that you may send us admonitory letters concerning this, for unless it is quickly extinguished, we will easily incur great peril both to souls and bodies. May the grace of the Holy Spirit, which inwardly teaches you and reveals many secrets to you, also deign to manifest these things to you according to His pleasure. Farewell.

Letter 278: R278: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Convent von Hane

To the congregation of brothers in Hane, from Hildegard.

I, a poor little form, long burdened with much illness, was compelled by true wisdom to utter these words of wisdom to the people of this place. And I heard that the same wisdom proposed its work to this people, namely, how it had established heaven and earth in right measure, so that the brothers of this people might know how their institution was first established and how it is now destitute. And she said, "I have circled the sphere of heaven, establishing its height and depth so that they might not exceed their proper measure! And I ordered the breadth of the whole world so that it might not exceed its measure inordinately. I made the sun to shine by day and cover the darkness, and the moon to shine by night with the stars. For in that word when God said, 'Let it be,' all these things were made as they now persist. Therefore, consider yourselves, people, in these things as in a mirror, so that you may remain in what you have begun. For God breathed into man the breath of life, and thus vivified, he became flesh and blood. Furthermore, He gave him the companionship of angels with praise and ministry and subjected the rest of creation to him. For God had granted him the light of eternity, but he listened to the worm in all this honor, and thus by transgressing God's commandments, he was blinded and extinguished. Wherefore, the devil rejoiced in himself, saying, 'The God whom I could not surpass in heaven, I have surpassed in His work, that is, in man, who is another god.' For the devil called man 'god,' just as he wanted to be 'god' himself. But God, in His ancient counsel which He had in Himself before time, considered how He might keep His ordination so that no one could resist Him in it. And He hid this ancient counsel from the knowledge of all creatures within Himself, so that the devil neither knew it nor knows it, and he

will be unaware of this counsel until the last day, when he will then, in his greatest confusion, perceive and know some of it, through which he will be entirely confounded. For the devil thought that man, whom he wanted to be inseparably lost, was truly lost. For men lived in great cruelty and forgetfulness of God, forgetting that they were men, living inhumanely, until the same ancient counsel chose for itself a certain sanctified people. And God prefigured sobriety and virginity in Abel, who, made a martyr for righteousness, did what his father neglected to do. The sanctified people recognized themselves as men and lived humanely, from whom Noah arose, whom God preserved in the ark. But God, wanting to submerge iniquity, opened the mouth of the abyss and submerged many creatures in water, and then He swore by Himself that He would no longer destroy all flesh with water, remembering that man was to be regenerated and saved by water. After the flood, the ancient counsel showed many miracles to confound the devil, who rejoiced within himself over the killing of Abel, saying, 'Behold the work of God, which I have cast out of paradise, lies divided on earth.' But Noah, sanctified in the Holy Spirit, worked and built an altar to God, in which the ancient counsel prefigured that altar which John saw in the Apocalypse, upon which the prayers of the saints ascended. For when man prays in penance for sins and seeks salvation from God, he is called holy. The ancient counsel also performed many signs in Abraham, who left his country and kindred with his own will and entered into the hard law by which death was confounded and the malice of the serpent was wounded with an incurable wound, when he fulfilled God's commandments, which Adam did not do, having transgressed God's commandment and followed his own will. The same counsel also established the purification of the law in Moses, and through the blood of goats and calves, prefigured that the innocent lamb was to be sacrificed for man. For the Son of God, coming forth from the heart of the Father, was born of a virgin, and

fulfilled all these things by Himself. Virginity arose in the Son of God, who, raising the banner, penetrated the heavens, because the same Son of the Virgin was wholly perfect, wholly holy, and through Him, a great order of virgins arose, which the old law did not know. But He was also a priest when He sacrificed Himself on the altar of the cross for men, to whom priests are joined in their priesthood, who ought to imitate the angels, who are the messengers of God. For angels, by the duty of their office, show the works of men to God as a writing, which priests also do when they receive the sins of men through penance and show them to God through granted mercy. Thus, too, did the steward, who was accused before his lord of wasting his goods, when he ordered each debtor of his lord to write less than he owed. This steward is also the synagogue, which could not have any liberation through the blood of goats and calves but prefigured the sacrifice of the innocent lamb, through whom it feared to be deprived of its office. And it said within itself that it could not endure the hardness of the law, which commanded that if anyone did this or that, he should die! and also blushed to be cast out, so that it would not be refreshed in any petition of mercy. From which, when many turned to indulgence in the Son of God, it was praised for the merit of indulgence. For when a servant, through penance and confession, gives retribution to his lord, he is greatly praised by him because he loved him much, as Mary Magdalene loved Christ. This writing of mercy is present to the priests, wherefore it is also fitting that they imitate Christ, love chastity, and flee from incest. For the Son of God suffered on the cross to make the unjust just and also draws them to Himself, as it is said of the steward. But Abel was a martyr for righteousness. After the passion of the Son of God, a multitude of martyrs arose who suffered for His faith and confession, who are also accompanied by other martyrs, namely those who, fighting against sins and vices, conquer themselves. And these are the feathers of the aforementioned

martyrs. But those who unjustly persecute them, the vengeance of God will fall upon them. And those who persecute virginity by afflicting it with pains will not escape the vengeance of God. And therefore, it often happens that nobles by the judgment of God become ignoble and the rich become poor, and that many are subjected to other dangers and calamities. Those, however, who oppress and blaspheme their priestly office unjustly, are similar in their guilt to Cain, who killed his brother, and are therefore to be constrained and punished. For the priestly office is in its teaching from the Lord God. Thus, wisdom has built a tower in the crowd of this place, adorned it with pearls, topaz, and sapphire, and placed watchers in it, and constructed a winepress near it, which she entrusted to certain men to press wine in it, and also made a house near it, in which she ordered others to be who would take care of all things pertaining to their fields. But a strong and pestiferous storm of madness arose, so that the men guarding the aforementioned winepress were throwing javelins at the same tower, and those dwelling in the aforesaid house were throwing stones against the same tower, whence those in the tower were casting stones against them. This tower designates the height of teaching, adorned with pearls, that is, those who lived in innocence and holiness from childhood, illuminated with topaz, that is, those who, choosing the best part, renounced the world, and adorned with sapphire, that is, those who for the love of God denied the pomp of the world and themselves. In it are watchers, that is, those who preside in teaching over their subjects. The winepress shows the office of those who, yoked by consecration, attend to the ministry of Christ's passion at the altar and cultivate and preserve the vineyard of the Lord of Hosts. But the house shows the custody and constraint of those who, being simple and living in the world, leave the world and themselves for God and labor in necessary bodily things and yet preserve spiritual life. The storm notes the temerity by which those in the

winepress send arrows of pride to their superiors and those standing in the house direct the hardness of disobedience against them.

Therefore, the same superiors, provoked to injury, show themselves harsh to their subjects with words of anger. But wisdom has established a truce of correction for all these, as in the Gospel the cultivator of the vineyard said to his lord about the vine, 'Lord, let it alone this year also until I dig around it and put manure on it.' For to dig around it is for man to suppress the will of his own property, otherwise he can never obey. But to put manure on it is to submit to the superior in humility and subjection. For when man inclines to obedience, he reckons all carnal desires and himself as dung. Now, therefore, I, a poor and weak form, say to you, the aforesaid brothers of this place: May the inextinguishable fire of life burn in you, and may it so fill you with its light that you may be able to remain in it as you have begun. For when the fruitful time of correction and amendment arises in you, the stones of your tower will receive their brightness as they were before.

Letter 279: R279: Monastery von Höningen to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

From the congregation of the monastery of Höningen, to Hildegard.

To the temple of the Holy Spirit and the reverend and beloved bride of Christ, Hildegard, and the sisters of Saint Robert in Bingen, our most desired teacher! The entire harmonious congregation of the monastery of Höningen, with humility and persistence in good works, wishes to be exalted to eternal glory. The gracious revelation of your esteemed opinion, sprinkled upon us like the inestimable flower of a paradisiacal narcissus, delights us so much that we are compelled to say with the apostle, "Thanks be to Him who always leads us in triumph!" in whom He manifests the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. Contemplating the whole structure of the immense body of the Church, in which one spirit distributes to each as He wills, we rejoice in the exuberance that flows in the excellence of your sanctity. For we see you as a mirror of divine piety, almost as after the times of the apostles. Therefore, in a moment of necessity, we flee to you as to the firmest asylum of an impregnable city, and we beseech you to assist us with your counsel and prayers. Our order, although in all things different from you, is honored and blessed through you. Therefore, it has been reported to us about your works, that you have briefly and clearly imparted desirable riches to the children of the Church, and because you do not lack this gift, we all together beseech the graciousness of your piety, falling at the feet of your sanctity, to leave us some memorial of your wisdom on the rule of our father, Saint Benedict, which is greatly necessary for us. We are called liars, perjurers, and transgressors of the aforementioned rule and despisers of synodal decrees. This happens chiefly because each of our prelates, according to his own will, despises the institutes of the canons and the rule, so that, being a law unto themselves, according to the testimony of the same rule, they

declare what they want as holy and just, and what they do not want, they think is not permissible. Hence, we are carried around by every wind of doctrine and are greatly burdened by the presumptions of men, which even the blessed father Augustine abhors, speaking thus of them: "Although it is not against faith, it still oppresses our religion, which the mercy of God wished to be free with very few and most manifest sacraments of celebration, with such servile burdens that the condition of the Jews is more tolerable, who, although they do not know the time of true freedom, are still subjected to legal sacraments, not human presumptions." Therefore, you will exhibit a work more precious than gold and more esteemed than the treasures of the whole world, if you strive to satisfy our petition, which is very necessary for all cloisters. For if you were to expound the entire Holy Scripture, you could not provide us with anything more useful and dear. Lastly, pray for us that our collected society, by the Holy Spirit, may never be disturbed by any hostile fraud, but that He who began a good work in us may deign to persevere in us with an operation pleasing to Him. May your maternal affection flourish.

Letter 280: R280: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Monastery von Höningen

Regarding the Rule of Saint Benedict. From Hildegard.

And I, a poor little woman, unlearned in human teaching, have looked to the true light and to the memory of Blessed Benedict according to your request. So that those things in the teaching of his rule that are more difficult and obscure to human understanding may be made clear to me by the grace of God. And I heard a voice from the true light saying to me: The Holy Spirit worked the most luminous gifts and mystical inspirations in Blessed Benedict, so that his mind burned with the love of God and shone in virtues like the dawn. He did not accomplish the persuasion of the devil's art in his works. For he was so filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit that in no work of his, not even for a moment or the blink of an eye, was he without the power of the Holy Spirit. He was also a closed fountain who poured out his teaching in the discretion of God, setting the sharp nail of his doctrine neither too high nor too deep, but in the middle of the wheel, so that each one, whether strong or weak or infirm, might be able to drink from it according to his ability. This wheel, however, is the circling power of God, by which God worked in the ancient saints up to Moses, who gave the law to the people of God, and also worked in other most holy men, whose nail of labors was fixed so high that the common people could not grasp it.

Blessed Benedict, indeed, drew his teaching in the fear of God most gently and taught the precepts of God in piety and established the wall of the rule in charity! And in chastity, he was a stranger to all the pomp and delights of the earthly world. And because he wrote his teaching in fear and piety, in charity and chastity, therefore nothing is to be added to or taken away from the same teaching because it lacks nothing! For it was made and completed in the Holy Spirit. And because he was the son of the dove, he said: "Listen, O

son, to the precepts of your father," and therefore he was full of the sanctity of the aforementioned virtues, just as Moses was the meekest man on all the earth.

However, as this pious father says, some monks scatter themselves in the diversity of their manners. It is evident to those considering it whence the reward will be given to them according to the merits of their works. For before the time of this blessed father Benedict, no certain rule confirmed monks; they wandered here and there in diverse uncertainty and instability, lacking certain teaching and certain location. Therefore, he, describing the vices of their instability of manners, advises that their life may be avoided by faithful monks. But to those truly following his teaching, rare permission to speak should be granted because of the gravity of silence, namely, then when some matters in counsel, some in business, or in greater needs are to be done. They should speak to each other and not separately, with permission given, and speak briefly and moderately about what is necessary, and then, at the sign given, all should keep silent according to the accustomed manner, for Benedict did not set a fixed hour for this permission each day, but held it in his power as was appropriate. For he did not grant this permission to speak unless compelled by some just necessity or some pious usefulness. However, because it is almost inhuman for a man to be always in silence and not speak, the same father leaves it in the power and discretion of the abbot, just as he grants him many other things, to foresee a suitable hour for his disciples, so that they may speak to each other about what is honest and necessary and not be affected by the tedium of indiscriminate silence. For after such permission to speak to each other, they could be more fittingly and strictly admonished and coerced to the silence of taciturnity.

However, he says that in wintertime, that is, from the first of November until Easter, according to the consideration of reason, they should rise at the eighth hour of the night so that they rest a

little more than halfway through the night and rise already having digested. This is because he who keeps vigil for a third part of the night hours in winter or who sleeps for a third part of the night and day in winter is not weakened in the brain or the rest of the body by these vigils or by this sleep. For a person who either keeps vigil beyond measure or sleeps beyond measure incurs weakness of mind and body. Thus, those who sleep rise for vigils already digested because the food eaten and drink taken, having been in the body for such leisurely hours, has already been transformed. It is necessary for a person to rise because these vigils bring health to a person when he has shaken off inert sleep and when he has purified himself. For if a person sleeps beyond measure, he will easily incur fevers and will feel an internal heat stirring his flesh. But to defend himself from these and to serve God faithfully, he should fulfill the exhortation of the pious father with a good heart.

And it follows that what remains after the night vigils should be dedicated by the brothers who need something from the Psalter or readings to meditation, admonishing that they should not afterward be given to sleep or idleness but cautiously to the benefit of the soul. This winter interval is thus arranged according to what the time then permits until the morning praise begins with the day already dawning. Here, after the night vigils, that is, after the night psalms are finished, he designates an interval for the meditation of prayers or readings. But immediately he says about the summer interval: From Easter until the aforesaid first of November, the hour for the vigils should be so arranged that, keeping a very short interval for the brothers to attend to the necessities of nature, the morning praises, which are to be done at daybreak, should immediately follow.

In these words, it is noteworthy that both in summer and winter, whether with three readings or even with one, the brothers did not return to their beds for rest after the night vigils or after the morning

praises. Instead, they adjusted the night vigils after midnight in such a way that, already singing the morning praises, they would see the dawning day. And they were not burdened but rejoiced because, having rested for more than half the night and then rising, the person afterward keeping vigil was not weakened in his strength by these vigils, as previously mentioned.

However, what he says afterward, "when these things are said, the abbot should bless," does not demonstrate the Lord's Prayer being said there, just as it does not where he writes about the first nocturn of the Lord's day in this manner: "After the six psalms have been sung, as we have mentioned, and everyone sits in order in their stalls, four readings are to be read from the book, as we have mentioned." Nor even where he speaks of the second and third nocturns, because after the third nocturn he says, "when the verse has been said and the abbot has blessed, four more readings are to be read," making no mention of the Lord's Prayer there, lest it seem to be an interruption.

But after the six psalms of the second nocturn on a private day have been sung, he says, "After these, the reading of the apostle follows, to be recited from memory," and after these three readings, one from the Old Testament is to be read from memory, and again another reading from the apostle, to be recited from memory, namely follows. In this, he shows that when the brothers devote themselves to readings and meditation, they should commit to memory those things that are necessary in divine scripture so that when an opportune time arises and necessity presses, they may bring them forth without a written text. Just as the aforementioned readings are recited from memory, that is, without a book, because they are brief, so they will not endure an impediment in their brevity if they do not have a book to read from or a light to see by readily available.

But that he is silent about these matters in the daytime hours of divine work is because he leaves it to their discretion, whether they bring forth the chapters, that is, the aforementioned readings, from memory or from the book in the clarity of the day, since they will then endure less impediment because of the shining day. However, on Sundays and other solemnities, ordering the Gospel to be read after the night vigils, he means that at all times, both at night and during the day, the message of God should be heard and fulfilled and through it service to God should be rendered. He also intends that, after hearing the Gospel, the monks should remember that Gospel: "Behold, we have left all things and have followed You." And he also means that if anyone, due to the rarity of priests or some other impediment, cannot have Mass or attend Mass that day, the reading and hearing of the Gospel should suffice for him. And where he says that after the Gospel is read, with the blessing given, namely in the customary prayer, they should begin the morning praises, he does not show that an interval for the meditation of prayers or readings is to be held here. Nor does he prohibit the brothers from returning to their beds to rest after the morning praises if the time permits, especially if they have risen earlier because they were fatigued by the length of the nocturnal and divine service, allowing them to return to their beds silently at their discretion.

For what he refuses to be done, he openly forbids, and what he exhorts to be done, he openly declares. However, these things about which he is silent in this way, he leaves to the discretion and judgment of the abbot and the brothers. Hence, at the end of the night vigils, morning praises, and the daytime divine service of the hours, after the "Kyrie eleison," he indicates that the Lord's Prayer is to be said, where he says, "For the other things to be done, let the last part of that prayer be said so that everyone responds: 'but deliver us from evil.'" And he does not show that a collect is to be said there, because after saying "but deliver us from evil," he says, "And so let

the night vigils be ended," and again, "and it is completed," and again, "they are sent forth," without designating any collect, so that weariness is removed from those praying, and that the Lord's Prayer previously mentioned is not neglected, for he found no prayer more precious than the Lord's Prayer through which divine service is concluded. And further, at the end of Compline, he adds: "Kyrie eleison, the blessing, and they are sent forth," namely that blessing which is used up to this time.

And what he says, "Always remember what the prophet says: 'Serve the Lord with fear,' and again, 'Sing wisely,'" he means that he shortened the divine service so that it may be performed with joy and without tedium, diligently, because it is known to be brief. And because where the distinction is long, it is equally sustained by the spirit of those singing, but where it is brief, it proceeds without sustaining the spirit.

Indeed, chatter in the divine office is considered of very little value before God, for it is fitting that, standing before the king, as Blessed Benedict acknowledges, one should speak honorably. Afterwards, he adds: "In the congregation, however, the prayer should be greatly shortened." He advised that a prayer should be said before each canonical hour because, in what follows, he orders that the kiss of peace should not be offered to a guest until after a prayer has been said, much more so when Almighty God is to be greeted, a brief prayer should be said beforehand, lest they, afterward attending to psalmody, pay less attention to the psalmody itself because they have been fatigued by the preceding lengthy prayer.

Moreover, that monks should receive bedding according to the mode of their conversion, as regulated by their abbot, is made clear when he speaks about the brothers' clothing, where he says: "The bedding of the beds should be sufficient: a mat, a blanket, and a pillow." They should sleep clothed, namely in a simple and single garment

that is next to the skin, so that they do not lie naked, which was made of wool and not in double garments because they could not endure this, girded with belts or ropes so that the garment they sleep in does not slip off them, and so they do not appear naked.

And he also says: "If any brother is stubborn, disobedient, or proud," and immediately adds, "if he understands what kind of penalty, let him be subject to excommunication." Not that excommunication pronounced under the right of priesthood with the stole, but the excommunication by which he is separated from the fellowship of the brothers either in the refectory or in the divine office in the choir, or in the dormitory or similar places, because this penalty imposes a graver confusion and shame on those who understand it than corporal punishment. Whereas corporal discipline should be imposed on those who do not understand, as follows: "But if he is incorrigible, let him be subjected to corporal punishment," that is, either by beatings or other corporal chastisements, because words alone do not lead him to correction but the harsh bite of the flesh.

And regarding the cellarer of the monastery, he says: "He should offer the appointed portion to the brothers without any pretext or delay," that is, without a predetermined measure of determined distribution. Wherein is also understood the meaning of 'ty' which is 'to you' and 'po' which is 'power,' namely that the cellarer should not say to himself: "You have the power to give and deny as you wish," so that he may give better and more food to whomever he wishes or less and worse food to whomever he wishes, as seculars sometimes do in the courts of princes who dispense the portions there. And so that he does not assume this power to supply more to the needy than to the non-needy, because he will give more to the needy than to the one who is not needy, nor will he cause any delay in giving what is to be given.

Afterwards, it is added: "He who is to leave the week should make clean on Saturday, sweeping away the dirt and dust where necessary." And again: "Both he who is leaving and he who is about to enter should wash everyone's feet," namely at the command. And then: "An hour before the meal, he should receive a mixed meal," that is, bread and drink, namely bread dipped in the drink, which is called "offe," since there the bread is mixed with the drink. And afterwards: "He should receive a blessing when leaving," namely the prayer, and it immediately follows: "and having received the blessing, he should enter," that is, with an appropriate prayer.

Then he says: "The eating of meat should be entirely granted to the sick and very weak for their recovery," intending both the flesh of quadrupeds and birds, and excluding no meat that people usually eat. But when they are better, all should abstain from meat as usual, namely the meat of quadrupeds because the healthy did not eat those or their juice, but the sick did. However, the healthy did eat the meat of birds because they are clean and do not incite burning lust in those who eat them.

Then he adds: "And let them anticipate the canonical hours in their meals," that is, the hours set in the rule, so that the old and infants receive their meals and sweeter foods before others and more frequently than others. And again he says: "And so having received the blessing, he should enter to read," namely with the blessing of prayer. And immediately follows: "Nor should anyone presume to ask about anything there from the reading itself or from elsewhere, lest an occasion be given unless perhaps the prior wishes to say something briefly for edification." Because at that time, the one who was preeminent among those present would give admonitions for salvation concerning the same reading before they parted from each other, because then they were few, which they later avoided as the number grew, lest on this occasion they break out into idle words.

However, the weekly reader should receive a mixed meal, as mentioned before, before he begins to read, on account of the holy communion. For in the time of Blessed Benedict, one who was to read at the table served as if to God at the altar because he was to utter holy words. They communicated on the Lord's Day, but afterward they dined, lest while fasting he might feel a weakness of heart while reading. In this also, the aforementioned father intended that anyone faithful, after receiving the Eucharist, should observe himself more cautiously and diligently than usual in all things.

But when he adds: "Let two cooked dishes be sufficient for all the brothers," he indicates those foods which, placed over the fire, are stirred here and there with a little stick so that they are not burned. And what follows, saying: "If there are fruits or greens growing there, let a third be added," he refers to beans and peas and other such vegetables which are freshly gathered from the field, as fruits are taken from trees. And he commands that these should not be cooked but presented to the brothers with the skin removed as a third dish. Fish, cheese, or eggs are also to be understood as the third dish, and they are in favor. And this pious father did not name these because he foresaw that monks would not abstain from them, and therefore he did not forbid these since he did not name them.

Afterwards, he writes again: "The eating of quadruped meat is to be entirely abstained from by all, except for the very weak and the sick," where he is silent about birds, because he does not forbid their consumption to the healthy. For the same father, because during his time the monastic lifestyle was still crude and almost unfamiliar, avoided entirely forbidding them the eating of meat. Hence, he permitted them to eat birds. Then he says: "So that he may be seen by him or by all to repent with public satisfaction when the work of God is completed, prostrated and asking for pardon," and again, "thus that the guilty one should make amends," that is, by prostrating himself on the ground.

Afterwards, it is added: "At the hour when he desires what he previously refused, or anything else entirely, he should receive nothing until appropriate amendment is made, for any necessary thing will be denied to the insolent brother because of his contempt, until he shows the amendment of humility by penance." And again: "Then let him follow in the footsteps of all the brothers so that they pray for him, that is, to God, whom he has offended by his grievous sins," and again, "and they should do this until he blesses them publicly by greeting them and urging them to humility, and then unless he has made satisfaction, that is, by prostrating himself on the ground, asking for pardon there before all, he should be subject to a greater punishment, that is, before them in the mortification of his flesh."

But he says: "If the cause of the sin is hidden, that is, if a brother has secretly exceeded in some cases or committed a sin secretly, he should only reveal it to the abbot or spiritual seniors, confessing the bond of the sin, and thus obtain forgiveness." And he adds: "However, what each one offers, he should suggest to his abbot and it should be done with his blessing and consent. Therefore, no brother should avoid the regular and common food and drink in the assembly of his brothers that is regularly and commonly set before him, without the permission of his abbot, nor should he withdraw from the communal prayers or works by his own will, unless it is permitted by his spiritual father. However, from any regular and common food and drink in the assembly of his brothers that is regularly and commonly set before him, he may licitly withhold a part for his body, provided that no clamor arises from it, thus regularly and humbly following the common custom of the monastery everywhere without complaint."

Afterwards, he writes thus: "He should not presume to eat outside, even if he is entirely invited by anyone, unless it is commanded by his abbot. If he does otherwise, he should be excommunicated with

the excommunication by which a stubborn and disobedient brother is separated from the communion and society of his brothers, as previously mentioned, until satisfaction is made." And he says: "When the work of God is completed, all should leave in utmost silence, and reverence should be shown to God, so that, reverently departing, they bow, and that they may have reverence in other works as if they were in the service of God, not taking up any frivolity or excess."

Then it is added: "Therefore, when a guest is announced, he should be met by the prior or by the brothers with all the service of charity, and first they should pray together, that is, they should be led to the church to pray. Thus, the brothers should pray to God that they do not break their order with those same guests, but rather that the guests, seeing their way of life, may become better." And again: "With bowed head or prostrate body on the ground, Christ is to be adored in them who is also received, because when guests arrive, those who receive them or when they depart, those who escort and bless them, should bow before them or ask for pardon before them, as if Christ were present."

Immediately afterwards, it is added: "And after this, every kindness should be shown to him," which is both in the affable and sociable conversation of speech and in every necessary bodily need. And again: "The abbot should give water into the hands of the guests because of the office of humility, and the abbot and the congregation should wash the feet of all the guests," namely, those whom the abbot enjoins to that work.

For the blessed father Benedict, when guests whom he had received were about to eat, he offered them water for their hands, and when they rose from the table, he washed their feet. And he did this because of the example of the Son of God, which he exhibited to his disciples at the Last Supper, except for women, whose feet he did

not touch. But he showed them the contempt for the world both in his attire and in his holy way of life. For at that time, monks did not yet feel the tumult of incoming strangers, but those who came to them sought Christ and nothing else, whom they also found in their holy works.

And it continues thus: "Clothing should be given to the brothers according to the quality of the places where they live or the temperateness of the air," where he shows that clothing should be given to the brothers according to what they can endure and so that they may also be without murmuring. For where the region is of such coldness that people cannot abstain from warm garments out of necessity, because they avoid excess, both lambswool pelisses and lamb's wool tunics for the monks' attire are pleasing to the divine judge. Immediately it follows: "However, we believe that for monks in more moderate places, a cowl and a tunic for each should suffice," meaning a large cowl that reaches to the ankles, with short sleeves and barely extending beyond the hand, with two gussets on each side under the armpit flowing downward, to which a hood is attached above, which is a unique sign of the monk, signifying that he should not look toward the world when he has it over his head.

The tunic, however, should be made of wool and somewhat tighter than the cowl, but somewhat wider around the legs and extending to the feet, with sleeves not too wide nor too tight extending to the hands, with one gusset on each side under the armpit descending downward, which tunic lacked a hood above. And then: "The abbot should ensure that the measure is such that they are not short like those of some laymen but descending to the ankle, for they did not use breeches in their cells."

Therefore, he adds: "Those who are sent on a journey should receive breeches from the wardrobe and, upon returning, should restore them washed," where it can be understood that the monks living

under the rule of the same father did not use breeches except when leaving the cell. For because a multitude of people did not use breeches at that time, the same father, considering the customs of men and as a sign of childlike simplicity and humility, did not grant breeches to his disciples while they remained in their cell. But for those going out, whether on horseback or on foot, he permitted them breeches for the sake of chastity, masculine decency, and the respect of men.

But now, at this time, since the customs of men indicate this, it is not displeasing to God if monks, to avoid the blasphemy of incest which they might experience in the nakedness of their flesh, use breeches, so that being naked they do not touch flesh to flesh and remember carnal sins. And again: "The bedding of the beds should be sufficient: a mat, that is, either made of coarse linen or hemp, almost in the manner of a sack, filled with a kind of straw and placed over the mat which the monks had as a cover for the bed; and a blanket, that is, made of wool, which they spread over the bed during the day for the sake of decency and with which they covered themselves at night when they wished." Immediately he says: "Let the abbot provide everything necessary!" and he adds: "A belt, that is, with which they were girded over the tunic so that it would not fall off, since they slept without breeches, and a breechcloth which was next to the skin from which the leggings hung," and immediately he continues: "a napkin formed of linen with which they wiped away the sweat flowing from them while they worked."

Then he says: "And with the offering, wrap the petition and the boy's hand in the altar cloth," where it is understood that the parents' petition for the boy was written for testimony and confirmation when they offered him to God, just as the one who promised his stability, conversion, and obedience before God and His saints at his consecration, as previously shown. And then: "If anyone from the order of priests requests to be received into the monastery, he should

not be readily accepted," by which is understood a priest who had a position of preeminence, such as an archpriest or one in charge of a parish, who could hardly bring his mind to subjection because of that same preeminence. Not, however, a bishop, for it would be unfitting for the leader of souls of the people, who was also the abbot's master, to be subject to the abbot. But if he wishes to convert, let him be alone in penance without subjection to authority.

Then it is added: "And if it is for the sake of ordination or any other matter in the monastery," that is, if there are matters to be managed in obediences and internal offices or in external affairs, let him regard the place when he entered the monastery, namely the place of the purpose of humility and subjection, which acquires for him a good and high rank, into which place he will come, keeping before his eyes in his heart when he received the monastic habit in the monastery, which demonstrates the contempt of the world, not that which was granted to him for the reverence of the priesthood, that is, let him not consider that he previously held the place of a teacher, that he was previously a teacher and master among the people or in the clergy, nor think or consider himself more prudent and knowledgeable or more prompt or cautious in speaking than his other brothers nurtured in the cloister, since he conversed in the world and adhered to secular matters and passed through them all. But rather, for the sake of voluntary conversion, because he has willingly subjected himself to the discipline of the rule, and for the reverence of his priesthood, with others he will set a good example of holiness, showing himself to have obedience and subjection in all matters.

And the same father then says: "If later he wishes to confirm his stability, such a will should not be rejected, and then not only if he asks should he be received to be associated with the congregation, but he should even be encouraged to remain, so that others may be educated by his example, and because in every place one serves the

same Lord and one militates for the same King." Thus what this pious father wrote above: "The novice to be received should promise his stability in the oratory before all," and immediately he added: "He should make his petition about this promise in the name of the saints whose relics are there." And here he says: "Such a will should not be rejected, and afterward, it should even be encouraged that he stay." And again, "because in every place one serves the same Lord," thus he means it to be understood.

For if any monk leaves his monastery where he promised his stability and petition, as written above, on account of any instability of his own, either secretly or obstinately, and thus arrives in distant provinces, and if there he sees a monastery of his way of life where he wishes to remain in stability led by penance and requests to be received by confirmation, then if he is worthy, even if due to the length of his journey he does not have and cannot obtain commendatory letters, it is better for him to be received than to be denied entry. For if he were not received, perhaps he might be brought to despair due to weakness, illness, old age, or any other grave burden, or due to the length of the journey and his return to the monastery from which he left, and he might return to the world and remain in the world, and thus perish in both soul and body. But nevertheless, it is much more useful for him to return to his monastery from which he left without the permission of his spiritual father, if he can in any way, or to seek remission, than to stubbornly remain in a foreign place. Thus, if he knows that the discipline of monastic religion exists there.

The same father affirms in the following words: "The abbot should be cautious not to accept a monk from another known monastery to dwell without the consent of his abbot or commendatory letters," where he does not want monks who are bound by the aforementioned stability and petition to move from place to place according to their own will without permission but to firmly hold

their vow. Then he continues: "Nor should the occasion of the priesthood make one forget the obedience and discipline of the rule, but rather he should progress more and more in God." He should always remember the place where he entered the monastery, except for the office of the altar.

What is said: "A monk-priest ordained in his monastery should not be proud of his priesthood but with pious devotion keep in his heart the place of humility and subjection," following the example of Christ, when he received the monastic habit and embraced the contempt of the world. For at that hour, he subjected himself to serve both God and man, and moreover, he should think with a humble mind that he made himself a servant and minister of God when he subjected himself to the service of the altar, and thus in all things he will show himself to be more humble and more subject. For not only will he consider that he humbly and devotedly received the monastic habit, for which he will consider himself vile and obedient in all things without pretense, but he will also consider that because he subjected himself to God in the office of the altar, he will thereafter count himself humble and meek and the least in his own estimation.

He then adds: "Wherever brothers meet him, the junior should ask for a blessing from the senior," as in a greeting, because he will show that he is subject to his senior in all humility. Then he also says: "And always at the last prayer of the work of God, there should be a commemoration of all the absent," which is understood as the last prayer of the work of God, the Lord's Prayer, because earlier he says that the divine work is finished through this prayer as shown there, namely, "Letania and the Lord's Prayer and the dismissals should be done." For the disciples of this blessed father, when they said in the same prayer, "but deliver us from evil," added for the absent, "and protect your servants, our absent brothers," thus commemorating them. For they did not yet have the full collects of

prayers at that time, and therefore they often ended the divine service with the Lord's Prayer.

Then he says: "But for children up to the fifteenth year of age, there should be diligent discipline and careful supervision by all." And he says this because when a boy is under fifteen, he is tender in body and also tender in mind, and meanwhile, he has fear and can be bent to any good and does not dare to resist those correcting him stubbornly. But when he reaches the fifteenth year, he begins to flourish in youth like a tree that produces flowers, and his marrow and blood are strengthened, hence his mental strength also arises, so that he disdains to accept and endure childish corrections as he did before.

Lastly, the blessed father affirms all these things thus: "For those who do these things, the eternal kingdom will be open," because everything described in this rule is neither too lax nor too strict, but they look to the right and not to the left. Therefore, those who observe them will soon be led to heavenly places. Thus, I, a poor little woman, have heard these words of wisdom which taught me the obscure words of the rule of the aforementioned blessed father Benedict, so that I might openly express them. Therefore, may the gentle, meek, and God-fearing hear these things, understand them with a pious heart, and receive them with humble devotion.

Letter 281: R281: Helenger von Disibodenberg to Hildegard von Rupertsberg

Helengerus, abbot of Saint Disibod, to Hildegard.

Helengerus, by the grace of God a servant on the Mount of Saint Disibod and steward of the Lord's flock, though unworthy, along with the entire congregation of his brothers, to the venerable mother Lady Hildegard of Saint Rupert, illuminated with the ray of divine splendor beyond the capacity of human understanding, which we most truly know to be filled with the gifts of the sevenfold Holy Spirit, and who offers cups of the same fountain to the thirsty for the sake of divine reward.

Because, beloved mother, we have learned that by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and His command, who wills that all men be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth, your sanctity has recently visited us. To the same Paraclete, as much as we can, though not worthily, we give unceasing thanks, for we truly felt the ardor and touch of His illumination among us and within us, while we unanimously cast aside all the fuel of hatred and enmities, long-aged for many years, and fully came together in the unity of true charity, as if in one body and soul.

Therefore, we earnestly implore the love of your sanctity with supplications, that by the grace of the divine splendor bestowed upon you, by whose insight what is closed to your charity and hidden from other mortals is revealed to the eyes of your heart. For, out of debt, because with your sisters you have left us, though in body but not in spirit, as we truly hope and know, if we have truly come together in true charity, which is the beginning of all good, or if any root of any dissension still lies hidden among us, you may reveal it. But also, let us be silent about other things, both great and

small, which you recognize to be contrary to the eyes of divine majesty, and may you reveal them to us in writing.

Moreover, with unanimous consent, we earnestly and persistently knock at the door of your charity for the description of the deeds, virtues, and life of our patron and yours, the most blessed Disibod, in whose house you have been nurtured from your very infancy. We earnestly remind the ears of your piety and, with untiring prayers poured forth, we beseech you that the memory of your blessedness may be held in the praises of our same father, so that whatever God has revealed to you about him, you may disclose to us.

May the Almighty Father of eternal mercy inflame the mind of your charity with the light of His brightness and provide cups to refresh those who earnestly desire them!

Letter 282: R282: Hildegard von Rupertsberg to Monastery von Disibodenberg

To the congregation of Saint Disibod. From Hildegard.

When creatures came forth by the command of God, many stars, which were countless in number, existed in light. However, when the one who was Lucifer fell, and night, the night of death, was prepared for those who fell. But the planets, namely the angels of justice, who are flames of fire, remained with God and ministered in the inextinguishable fire, which is life. Indeed, fire has a flame that the wind moves, so that the same flame appears by flickering. Thus, in the voice is the word, and the word is heard. And fire has a flame, and it is praise to God, and the wind moves the flame, and it is praise to God, and in the voice is the word, and it is praise to God, and the word is heard, and it is praise to God. Therefore, every creature is praise to God. He who does not fear does not love, and he who does not praise does not work. And fear is fire, and charity expands like a flame! And thus the creature is praise, and man is the work. But if the creature did not exist, man would not know how to work. But the creature came forth by the command of God, and this counsel was in God, that he made man in his own image and likeness. For when the falling stars did not praise God nor declare his works, the night of death was inscribed for them because they neglected life and did not want the works of God. Thus they were counted as nothing. Then God had this great counsel within himself, that no adversity of the fallen should prevail against his strength. And he foresaw that in the female nature, he would do such a work that neither angels, nor man, nor any other creature could bring to completion. For when God formed man, the fallen angels, with deceitful opinion, approached man as they themselves were deceitful, and thus man became mortal. Then God foresaw the planets in Abel, who remained with him, which is the praise of

angels and men. And in him, he placed the foundation of the priestly office and his temple. Therefore, death killed him in the body. But from Abel to Noah, all the sons of men, like those who suck milk, slumbered in right knowledge. However, Noah built the ark by the command of God, in which God prefigured that he would save man to share in his praise as he had preserved the angels. Indeed, Abraham did a great work of obedience which wounded the neck of the ancient serpent through circumcision, through which God confounded him because he had instilled wickedness into man, which the virgin crushed when she placed the unicorn in her bosom, who, through ancient counsel, took on flesh in the womb of the virgin. Moses also wrote the law which obedience demonstrated through the mortification of the flesh, in which the seducer who had wounded it was confounded, and whose cunning by which he had deceived man through pride was ended through the mortification of the flesh of the faithful. Both Abraham and Moses were like two planets of the incarnation of the Son, just as the planets are like flames of fire. For Abraham foresaw Christ, and Moses performed works in creatures, namely by offering oxen, sheep, and goats, and by prefiguring the offering of the Son of God in the offering of the flesh of creatures. This was fulfilled when the virgin captured the unicorn, and when God made the ivory tower as was fitting, which is the pure virgin work in which the work of the great counsel was perfected, namely that God is man. For when the woman, having heard the word of the serpent, overshadowed the whole world, death entered her, and she became like a weak infant, and all creation, from her weakness, incurred weakness in its strength and honor. But God ordained a great counsel in her, namely such great miracles which neither angel nor man nor all creatures can comprehend, namely that the virgin, in the light of the sun of ancient counsel, reversed the fall of the woman into good. And this God did to the confusion of the devil, who had deceived the woman, not knowing

what was to come in her, just as he did not rightly know God. Therefore, he was buried from all happiness. Indeed, God made the creatures by his command to be servants, going before man to serve him. Then he created man and imposed works upon him, so that if he chose good, God would help him, or if he consented to evil, the devil from the north would lay snares for him! Because man is rational with two wings of knowledge, namely of good and evil. But the word is not without a voice, nor is the voice rationally without the word. The voice is sometimes heard, and no rationality is recognized in it. However, the word announces all useful and useless things with the voice. Thus, rationality is not without knowledge, just as man is not without entrails.

But it must be said how man begins to work. First, he sucks milk. Then he draws in soft food with breath. In the third stage, he eats with teeth, and in knowledge, he chooses what he wants for himself and removes what he does not want for himself, and then he is a youth. And afterward, he runs to the age of old age so that his marrow is filled with all knowledge, and then he does not feel the milk and the two earlier stages, but the changed age imbues him so that he knows the truth. Thus before the flood was milk, in Noah, however, was soft food, in Abraham was the eating with teeth and the choice of food. But in Moses, all childish works were finished when he foreshadowed the truth through the offering of the fleshly creature and touched the Son of God, in whom all the former things were finished and changed into better ones when he, a man of full age, taught wisdom and truth. But the age of the virgin is sometimes in wantonness, namely when it runs in the vanity of wantonness, and if she is a virgin, she often shows it in her actions and manners, just as if she is not a virgin, she cannot conceal it with many signs. For if a virgin looks to heaven so that she truly renounces the world, she imitates the Son of God and attends to God, who said to the serpent that his head would be crushed by the woman because his beginning

was perverse, which the virgin was to trample on, namely she who bore the Son of God. For from the Son of God, a new age arose through the water of renewal, who also gathered two planets to himself, who adorned his incarnation, namely virgins and monks who did not appear before his nativity, but in his nativity were born showing him, just as the morning star shows the sun, whence signs and miracles then shone more abundantly than before because he touched the earth through his humanity, and what was previously the voice of the prophets, the Son of God now did more fully by himself as it is written: "Fairer in form than the sons of men." And just as the hidden Son of God came into the world secretly, so he also gathered a foreign nature to himself, namely that men renounce the world and the pomp of the world. But just as the star showed him to devout persons, and the whole world was illuminated by those persons, so the church was first adorned by virgins and monks, wherefore all the peoples narrated them as if they were angels, just as the prophet cried out about them: "Who are these who fly like clouds and like doves to their windows?" And in the same spirit in which this was spoken, it was also said, "A virgin will conceive and bear a son, and his name will be called Emmanuel." Thus in all creatures, the Son of God was gradually shown through signs, for wisdom is not hasty but foresees diligently so that there is no defect in all its orders, which a foolish man does not do, who acts suddenly according to what he suddenly thinks, and therefore his work is often not rightly known, just as it also happened with the first angel, who, in the estimation of his honor, fell into a dark pit as if in the blink of an eye, where he lost all his ornaments and handed himself over to the black and inextinguishable fire. However, the aforementioned planets ran in their significations with great honor and reverence of their conversation until the time of a certain tyrant who began to kiss the counsel of the ancient serpent. And then the time of the woman came almost like the first fall, so that all justice was weakened

according to the weakness of the woman, and this will run beyond the middle of its course. But the elephant with great eruptions will call for justice, making another time arise, and thus a useful time of probity, wars, and justice will come. Now, however, all these things have been said for the admonition of the people of this place, namely how their religion began, what its current state is, and what it will be like. For this place arose in the burning sun with such strength of spiritual people as if it were dead to this world, and also in such simplicity that they could not capture the secular people with charity to the fullness of the inspector of God, not encountering each according to their quality, but insisting inflexibly on the rigor of their conversation. For at first, they were like fire and did not go around in flame and were hard to other people because they looked at heaven like eagles. Later, they accelerated to a better part and ran like deer to the fountains of waters, ascending from virtue to virtue and shining in the light of charity to God and men, and because they burned in the love of God, therefore, they were the praise of God among the people, just as the planet is the flame of fire. Then the people narrated them as if they were the noblest stones, namely topaz, emerald, sapphire, and jacinth, with praise because they separated themselves to a better part and because they ascended from virtue to virtue and expanded themselves in charity, and because through active life in hospitality and almsgiving they looked to all and to Mount Zion. Hence they were named the daughters of Zion by all. But they also worked in the obedience of mortification of the flesh with Abraham, and in the sweet odor of the rule with Moses, leaving the pomp of the world for the humility of the incarnation of Jesus Christ, making themselves vile to the world. But afterward, a pale cloud of vain glory and pride ascended over the fire of their good works, just as a cloud obscures the sun so that it is hardly seen. Therefore, some tempests came upon them, which laid them low, but they rose again somewhat, so that because of the pale

cloud of vain glory and pride, the fire was scarcely seen there, which is discipline and good custom of the rule, whence also they declined both to the manners of the spiritual and the secular, and this almost until now.

But now they are bent down to their knees, for in both parts of the ordering of wisdom they have a defect. For heaven is rightly ordered in praise, and the earth is rightly established in working justice.

Heaven and earth are like soul and body, and the earth desires what it does not praise. And between them, there is this struggle, although they are instruments of God. For the body desires sin for the taste of the flesh, but the soul forbids this from all sides. Yet they are both instruments of God. But those to whom this speech is directed say that the pomp of the world and the point of their conversation are one and the same, but this is not in wisdom. They wish it to be so, but it absolutely cannot be so. Therefore, they are bent down to their knees, like the Samaritans who wished to have the law and worshiped a foreign god. Hence, they are clouded by these works like a pale cloud, so that the burning sun of the good intention of the rule does not appear in them. And thus, great tempests of injuries fall upon them, namely that they are servants to those whom they should have ruled with honor for the service of God. But they serve them because they do not see the burning sun in them. For man was made and has works, but virtues are praise, and man works them in the Holy Spirit to the right, but to the left, he tends with the diabolical crowd to the north. Therefore, hear this: Ignominy, which is the enemy of virtues, walks among you on one foot, like the foot of a duck, where you are bent down to your knees. But look to a good soldier and imitate him, who, even when he falls to his knees before his enemies, defends himself with a sword and often rises up again with renewed strength in a praiseworthy manner. Strive, therefore, to kill your enemies with the sword. For your sword is obedience and the precepts of the rule. But your enemies are disobedience, neglect

of the precepts of the rule, pride, and forgetfulness of your conversation, by which you are so defeated that you can scarcely stand on your knees. However, the time of pressure and destruction, namely the weight by which the grape is pressed in the winepress, has not yet come. But still, now is a most vile time. Therefore, look to the former times and consider in what honor they were and defend yourselves from your enemies, and God will not refuse to help you. For the time of good intention and conversation will come someday and will look to the first dawn. And those who then leave the world for the love of God will long for God and will thus persevere in good. And then it will be said in a clear voice by the people in the Holy Spirit: "The voice of the turtle dove is heard in our land," which is the voice of hermits and pilgrims of this world, so strongly looking to heaven that they want to go on the narrow path that leads to heaven. And these look at all things past and gone, whether prosperous or adverse, so that they may beware of how to escape the most sharp hawk, just as a dove flees from it when it sees it in the mirror of the water. Now again, listen. Among you, however, there is still some bright and fiery light but with vicissitude. Bright indeed in good will, fiery in the fear of the Lord, yet with some foolish dispersal. But keep yourselves from the black filth that is contrary to God and men, and which is also the heart of the devil because with those who are in these sins, the devil plays with all his will's strength. Therefore, I, a miserable and poor little form, in the mystical vision which I have been taught by God from my infancy, saw and heard these words in great illnesses and was commanded to speak them to you in your place with a living voice. But do not despise or reject them lest you die on the earth, but may the Holy Spirit perfect his building in you and make you end in a good end, for your place is in that blessing in which the Lord gathered it from the common people to his service, as he did from the beginning when he always reserved some peoples for himself as an inheritance.

Also, guard yourselves so that ignominy does not walk among you on two feet. For if this happens, God will kill you with dangerous vengeance, which has not yet happened to you, and therefore, in all your perils, you have had his protection. But when you fully perform the works of the property of your will as if God is not to be seen by you, then detriment will occur to you, and the adversities that were predicted to you will be present.

The Life of Saint Disibod the Bishop

In a mystical vision, as God willed, due to the request and command of my superiors, namely Abbot Helenger and all the brothers serving God on the aforementioned mountain of blessed Disibod, I was observing the life and merits of the same father. And after the visions of the book of the life of merits had been proclaimed, in the year of our Lord's Incarnation one thousand one hundred and seventieth, during the reign of Frederick, Emperor of the Romans, under the oppression of the apostolic seat for nearly three years, lying on the bed of illness, out of the mercy of wisdom, I heard a voice from heaven, vigilant in body and mind, saying thus:

"Disibod, chosen by God from his infancy, inspired by the Holy Spirit like blessed Nicholas and blessed Benedict and their kind, longed with a thirsty heart for every good that he saw and heard. Therefore, it can be said of him: 'Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies, you have perfected praise because of your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger.' This is to be understood thus: In the good affection of infants not yet speaking, and those who ought more to suck milk than to do wonders, you, who are the Lord of all, have led to the perfection of the praise of your name, for you have often worked your wonders in them, namely by inspiring those who do not yet have full understanding so that they often spoke and acted in the Holy Spirit unknowingly. And you strengthened others against the laws of the flesh with such fortitude that, desiring heaven with all their might, they did not exercise the functions of the flesh in

sinning. And no one should doubt in these things, for the serpent's deceit could not make these holy and good things happen in those blessed ones. For you did this because of your enemies, namely the lost angels, so that they might see your power in the ignorance of children to their confusion, and thus you destroy the foe, namely him who denies you in all good things, and the avenger, namely the one who casts stones and darts of his wickedness against your words and miracles by reproaching and perverting them. These evils had no power in the aforementioned blessed men, for they spoke what was right. For God worked in blessed Disibod from his infancy to his decrepit age in his gifts, so that his childhood did not play in wickedness, and his youth did not burn in wantonness, and his mature age did not look to the left. For he left all the pomp of this world in heart and body, so that some would affirm that he was foolish, some that he was vain, some that he was erring, and some that he was remarkable in his works, saying, 'What is this that he does?'"

The parents of blessed Disibod, flourishing in worldly freedom, were of the excellent lineage of the Irish, but they did not have much pomp and glory of the world in excess. Hence, some tyrants, swelling with pride, having subdued many in the same region by tyranny, also sought to oppress and subjugate the parents of this blessed man, who was a boy at that time. However, they, mindful of their noble lineage and rejecting unjust subjection, withdrew from them and moved far away to more remote places of the same region. They took up residence in a certain town near a river that flows from the sea, together with their son, blessed Disibod, and all their possessions. There, they entrusted him to religious men to be instructed in letters and other liberal arts. And by the grace of the Holy Spirit, he retained in his good memory with keen intelligence what he heard from his teachers, which brought no small joy to his parents laboring in the affliction of exile. Thus, this boy, advancing

from day to day, growing in body and holiness, ascended from study to study of good works, praying and giving alms, so that with all desire he hastened to everything he could hear or learn about God. And thus, through the stages of virtues and through the increments of his age, having received each sacred order, he reached the grade of priesthood when he was thirty years old. When he received it with the fear of the Lord, he acted like a good perfumer who plants all kinds of spices and aromatic herbs in his garden, always striving to keep his garden green and not arid. In these pursuits, the holy man was mindful of the words of wisdom where it says: "I have gathered my myrrh with my spices," which is to be understood thus: I, who ought to sweat with righteous works, offer to God the mortification of my flesh with good intention, becoming a pilgrim from vices for the love of him, fleeing the common uncleanness of those and desiring to have no fellowship with them, for I hasten to love and worship the true God in the spices of virtues, with the love of heavenly desire not failing in my heart with his help. In this right and holy will, this blessed man was as if dead to the world, so that many seeing these things acted as if they did not recognize him and abhorred staying with him because he compelled himself to serve the spirit entirely and not the flesh.

And while he was serving God in such virtues praiseworthily, and was therefore irreproachably pleasing to those who loved God, it happened that a certain bishop in parts of that same region migrated from this present life to the life of future hope. And when the people, both the lesser and the greater, had gathered according to custom to elect another for themselves as their bishop, some of them who knew the honesty of life and the sanctity of blessed Disibod unanimously elected him as their bishop. However, some whose life and conduct were reprehensible forbade this, saying, "What good is it to make a man who is silent and does not speak, and who does not know the people, our master?" But God looked upon this blessed

man as it is written: "Justify the humble and the poor." Which is to be understood thus: Justify this one who humbles himself to the ground for God and who confesses himself to be poor and needy with his whole heart in holy works, because justice, with the open eye of mercy, looks upon him. For this humble man always desired poverty and always looked to God with the dove's eye of simplicity, so that he might acquire eternal riches for himself. Hence, God also loved him. He considered death for death and reckoned all deficient things as nothing, placing all his own in God. Therefore, God chose him. Indeed, the supreme judge had hidden this man from the common people but revealed him to those who loved him.

Therefore, although some were astonished, he willed that he should be their master and bishop. And when this blessed man was compelled by the wiser ones to take up the aforementioned burden, he declared himself unworthy of such a great dignity and, with all his might, withdrew his hands and feet. But nevertheless, with those urging and prevailing who feared God, even unwilling, by divine ordination, he was placed in the seat of the bishopric. In this bishopric, he began to proclaim and teach the justice of God, and he exhorted all whom he could to be subject to God. And what he had been imbued with by the Holy Spirit from his infancy, he now manifested by belching it forth, and he provided them with good examples of holy virtues with fatherly affection in himself.

However, some loved him for the merits of the virtues they saw in him and, with the attentive ear of the heart, received his teaching. But others, who had cast God behind their back, cried out furiously against him, saying, "He lives as if he were not a man, and thus he compels us to live inhumanly. And who can listen to him?" And they inflicted many injuries upon him. However, he gathered a few faithful men to himself, who provided him with both consolation and assistance in all things. And he afflicted his heart daily for God, saying, "O Lord God, I, your servant, prostrate myself before your

mercy, doing what you have commanded. For you know that I desire you alone, wherefore I trust that you will fulfill my desire someday, as it is written: 'Delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.'"

Which is to be understood thus: O man who was conceived and born in sins, delight in the precepts of him who created you against the inclination of the flesh, also remembering who it was that liberated you. When you have done this, he will give you what you ask, because you do not ask for what should not be asked, but showing the affliction of your heart with a humbled spirit to him, crying out and grieving, you will constrain yourself to labor in what is right as an animal. Therefore, those who strive to repent and amend their evils in this way are wiser than the children of light, because they neither wanted nor did this. For it pleases God that a man should have a hard battle against himself and against the dragon. And whoever does this, God will quickly fulfill his prayers and desires, just as he did in blessed Disibod, who had hard battles as long as he lived in the body! But nevertheless, he happily concluded them with a good end. Meanwhile, while this holy man was presiding over his people with words and examples in the seat of the aforementioned dignity, great ridicule and great schism boiled up in that whole region! Some indeed resisting the Old and New Testaments and denying Christ, others favoring the heresies of heretics, others embracing the sect of the Jews, others loving the sect of the pagans, others burning with a shameful desire to live not humanely but in the confusion of beasts, others indeed having discipline for the sake of humanity but not striving to do any good. Against these great errors and confusions, blessed Disibod opposed himself manfully and fearlessly, enduring many reproaches and injuries patiently, wishing rather to lose the present life than to consent to such and so many inconvenient evils.

And having endured these things for some years without eradicating these evils, even at the risk of his own life, he finally, affected by weariness, said to God in his prayers with great lamentation: "O God and O judge of all human deeds, what profit is there for me to labor with this people, who transfix your justice with rabid bites?" Indeed, the authors of the aforementioned errors, along with the people involved in those same errors, seeing that this blessed man would not consent to their errors and wickedness but would constantly and fearlessly rebuke them everywhere, laid many snares for him. And finally, with a gathered multitude of unbelievers, they expelled him from his seat with many insults. But he, preferring to serve God in peace rather than to delay without the fruit of usefulness, gathered a few religious men to himself and left the seat of his dignity, which he had ruled strenuously and religiously for ten years, his homeland, and everything he had for the name of Christ, saying that it was neither profitable for him nor for others to remain there where such great unbelief and hardness of wickedness had grown. And he took up the pilgrimage he had long desired for eternal life with a cheerful mind. And when he left Ireland, after wandering through many regions and diligently observing many other places, seeking rest for his soul, he finally came to Alemannia, where he found a harsh and unkind people. And there, weary, he stayed for a while. While giving words of salvation and examples of holiness to that people, many who heard him loved him, but many others did not care to hear or love him. But while he was staying in that province, deliberating with himself where he might go, he heard a good and sweet report of the religion of blessed Benedict, who had recently migrated to the Lord and had left many lovers of his religion. And thus, by the admonition of the Holy Spirit, he realized that his desire was not yet fulfilled, for he had long desired to associate with himself some men of true and perfect religion for the people once entrusted to him. For this reason, he again journeyed from place to place, finding neither

in the places nor in the manners of those people anything that pleased his soul. Then he began to weep and pray, saying, "Incline your ear, O Lord, and hear me, for I am poor and needy." Which is to be understood thus: Condescending to my tribulations, incline, O Lord, who are the ruler of all, the ear of your mercy, and hear the words of my prayer, for I am poor in soul because of the pusillanimity of my mind and needy in body through the contrition of my afflictions, I who ought to follow and love you above all. Remember, therefore, that from my infancy I have strived to serve you, and for your love, I have always loved poverty and the contempt of the world. Then God, receiving these prayers because of the greenness of his good desire, instilled sweet consolation of rest into his mind, like dew falls on grass, and also revealed to him in a vision of the night by some manifestation that at some time a place suitable to his wish would be found by him. For God did for this blessed man as he did for other beloved ones who desired him with all their affection, seeming to be present with them in seeing, speaking, and hearing because of their great and good intention, which they confidently directed towards him with all their heart. Moreover, the Holy Spirit removed from him all vain glory and fame, which is in many people who pray and fast according to their own will in simulation, when they unjustly seek something from God. When anything happens to them as they wish, they consider it as a manifestation from God. But those who are like this will be scattered like chaff by the wind. But when a man mortifies himself from vanities, he almost falls asleep in them. Then pride and vain glory and the seeking of honor from the people, and other vices are constrained by the virtue of God, so that the man may not be diverted from the love of the embrace of his Creator in any way by their suggestions.

But blessed Disibod, rejoicing for the good hope of his desire, because he knew that it would be fulfilled through God's help, when

he heard good reports about the people living in the regions of Gaul near the Rhine, namely that those people were indeed harsh but nevertheless adhered more devoutly to ecclesiastical religion in their way of life, he was weary of the mockery of the scornful people and, scarcely waiting, hastily directed his journey to the river Rhine. Turning aside and proceeding through various paths, he arrived at the little river Glan, and after crossing it, he saw a high and wooded mountain. After ten years of pilgrimage, he ascended this mountain. Sitting there, tired and resting, he said to his companions, who were three in number, the first of whom was called Senior Gislialdus, the second Clemens, and the third Salustus, who had come with him from Ireland, moved by the Holy Spirit, "This will be my place of rest." For when he then traveled around that mountain on all sides and diligently considered its aspects, its pleasantness increasingly pleased his soul to inhabit, because the height of it offered difficult access to those coming, and because the streams flowing on both sides would give refreshment to the bodies of those living there. And he prayed, saying, "God who dwells above the heavens and rules the abyss, I pray that the pleasantness of this place may be turned into the pleasantness of souls, because it is fitting that in this place, a faithful people may serve you faithfully." And saying this, he designated for himself a dwelling in the descent of the same mountain towards the east because of the convenience of water, and he began the way of life he had long desired, vigorously praying, watching, and fasting. He led a hard and austere solitary life there. His companions who were with him, so that they might not have any joy with one another, built their dwellings separately, farther from him. And it should be known that they sustained themselves there for some time on the roots of herbs, as they had no other food. At that time, the mountain with the adjacent woods, and the accessible and inaccessible places around it, extended for more than a mile, not to one person but to the inhabitants of the province, both lesser and

greater. Hence, it happened that when people entered that forest, either for hunting, fishing in the adjacent rivers, cutting wood, or for their other needs, they saw this blessed man either digging up roots or collecting other necessities for himself here and there. And thus, after some time, he was revealed to the people. For a rumor went out among the people that a certain saint, sent by God, had come to that place with some others. Many, amazed and with good desire, came to him and conferred with him about useful things, to which he responded with words of salvation and life. For from the time of his exile until then, he had labored especially in the language of those people, hence he both understood and spoke it as best as he could. Thus it happened that those to whom he gave words and advice of unending life often brought him and those staying with him the necessities of the body. But the servant of God, together with the men associated with him, gathered the poor and needy to themselves, and whatever remained beyond their daily sustenance, they fed these. For he was always mindful that Adam perished because of food, and therefore he frequently held in his heart Antony, Macarius, and others like them, who had lived on herbs and hard foods, so that by their example he might restrain his body from soft and delicate foods, lest he be deceived by the ancient serpent. And the more this blessed man afflicted his flesh, the more God multiplied his grace with him and revealed him through signs of miracles. Hence, many sick and weak people were brought to him, whom the Holy Spirit suddenly healed through his merits. Yet, humbly fearing, he fled the praise of men as much as he could. And when the fame of his holiness spread throughout this entire province by the people, some God-fearing individuals came to him and built a small oratory at the descent of the aforementioned mountain to the east, where he might celebrate divine offices with his own, so that both they and others coming there for God might receive words and pastures of life from him. Others, towards the west, cleared

brambles and thickets at the foot of the same mountain and prepared gardens, pastures for the cattle, and small huts for the blessed man. Hence, because of the thickets that were cleared there, which are called "stuodun" in the common speech, that place was first called Studernheim. Many also came to this blessed man from distant regions and entrusted their souls to him in good faith and hope, which the people living in the same province, by divine instinct, feared and said that they had been negligent in this matter, for God had visited that place for the glory and honor of his name through his saint, whom they, having near them, had neglected to visit and frequently honor with their possessions. Hence, it happened that the princes and other nobles and rich men, together with the rest of the people inhabiting those lands, traversing the same mountain with all its boundaries beyond the flowing rivers Nan and Glan as aforementioned in length and breadth, offered it to this blessed man and his successors in the consecration of their offerings, because they saw the miracles of God in him. Thus, the necessary things of the present life might suffice without want for the good men gathered there in the holy way of life. And with a common voice and cry, they said, "Praise to you, Lord God, for you have deigned to send this your saint to us."

Upon receiving this offering, the blessed one was greatly fearful, remembering that he had previously endured many adversities in the burden of the episcopate. Kneeling to God, he prayed that this offering would arise to the fruit and vitality of souls through the gift of the Holy Spirit. Then, day and night, burning in his heart, he thought about how, as he had desired in his mind for many years past, and where he might gather religious and ascetic men. For in the spirit, he understood that it was fitting for God that a spiritual congregation should serve their Creator in that place. And inspired by the Holy Spirit, he directed all the devotion of his heart to the life and teaching of blessed Benedict, who had already passed to God

and had left some faithful ministers of his holy institution still living and surviving at that time. And he sent messengers with humble supplication to distant regions where the same way of life was flourishing religiously and holily, to plant the vineyard of the Lord of hosts according to the teaching of the aforesaid father, who had established a rule suited to the spiritual people by the gift and revelation of the Holy Spirit from all the lives of the saints. And thus, he attracted many religious men of the same way of life to himself, for whom he built an oratory and suitable dwellings on the brow of the same mountain towards the west for difficult access, so that they would no longer be troubled by the people, and lest perhaps their rigor and religion should turn to softness and sloth through the daily visitation of those coming. But he himself, to be ready for all occurrences and to satisfy all those coming to him with responses according to their quality, remained solitary in the dwelling and oratory he had prepared for himself, as mentioned above, at the descent of the same mountain towards the east. The congregation of these brothers increased both in number of men and in godliness, and whatever they had to do or possess was done by the command and permission of this holy man, and they practiced communal life according to the institution of blessed Benedict. For pious father Disibod strove that his congregation, composed and firm by the custom of the law constituted for them, would not allow the devil to prepare a pit of vices in it, and that he would not be able to transfix them with his arrows or separate them from one another, and that they would appear terrible to the devil and to men by the concord of virtues like an ordered army. He wisely taught them to fight against the hostile armies of aerial spirits in humility, and to avoid the vanity of pride and the arrogance of the mind in the delight of this world. He diligently proposed the praise and glory of the victor who has fought lawfully and has preserved himself well in the caution of right discernment. He also surrounded and fortified them

with the wall of rigor and strictness of all spiritual discipline, lest the devil should rush upon them suddenly and unexpectedly, knowing that he has the greatest zeal to rush upon the spiritual people, and that he rejoices much more if he overcomes a spiritual man according to the will of his wickedness than if he conquers many secular people, because he sees that he has made him similar to himself when he falls from heavenly desire, just as he himself fell from heaven through pride. In this way, this holy man began to gather and strengthen his sons. When the secular people saw this, they ran from the entire province, and whatever he began to work and do in his needs, they eagerly and diligently completed. Hence, it happened that that blessed congregation was multiplied to the number of fifty perfect brothers within twelve years. For at that time, few men of this way of life were found, and no one undertook this path unless proven. But the Holy Spirit, who had planted this congregation, also watered it, just as dew falls on a fertile field, so that those living in it under discipline ascended from virtue to virtue and did not suffer any impediment from the ancient adversary. For where the Holy Spirit is in his miracles, there the same ancient enemy will be fearful and will not dare to enter. But if he should secretly sow anything there, the Holy Spirit will again trample it down to his confusion.

The merits and sanctity of blessed Disibod were accompanied by the signs and miracles of God, which were often renewed without weariness, for God will always do new things. For example, a man whose tongue was so weakened by the excessive illness of his body that he could not utter human words came to him from distant parts, tearfully pleading with signs and gestures as best he could, that he might intercede with God on his behalf in this affliction. The pious father, having prayed and feeling the grace of God present with him, remembered the example of the Lord where he made the mute speak, and he breathed into the man's mouth, saying, "In the name of

him who said 'Ephphatha' to the mute, and he began to speak, I command you, bond of infirmity that has weakened this man's tongue, to be loosened and to depart from here, and no longer impede his tongue from speaking." Immediately, the bond of his tongue was loosened, and he spoke human words correctly, giving thanks to God and this blessed man.

Following this, a certain dropsical man, swollen with an extraordinary tumor, was brought to the saint by his friends, and with many tears, he begged for bodily health from him. Though he hesitated a little and declared himself unworthy of such a deed, he was finally overcome by the supplication of the petitioners. He prayed to the omnipotent Lord for him and, touching him with his hands, blessed him. Thus, by the grace of God, the disease gradually disappeared from him. Also, a certain leper, disfigured by horrendous skin, came to this blessed man and, after first pouring out prayers for his infirmity, even threatened that he would never leave until he was restored to health. Moved by his importunity, this blessed man finally took him into his dwelling, kept him with him for some time, and frequently poured out prayers to the Lord for him, restoring him to his former healthy and beautiful skin. The very truth, which then saw and did these things, now also brings them to light for those unaware.

Many other signs and miracles were performed by him on the blind, the lame, the weak, and those possessed by diabolical influence, and even on those who had lost their senses from the tempest of bad humors. These were brought to him from distant and nearby parts, and all were healed through him, for the power of God was in him. For this servant of God lived among his own like a hermit, a life which is the root of monastic life, because men of that way of life, entirely withdrawn from the world, live in solitude with the praise of angels, and their life is so laborious that many, due to the frailty of both body and mind, could not endure it if they undertook it rashly

and suddenly. In this strictness, this blessed father lived, strengthening his subjects in every good work by teaching and example, like a man who makes a burning fire burn strongly, and for this reason, they neither sought nor wanted another master while he lived, especially since they had among themselves, by his command, those who would direct them in the rectitude of their way of life without offense and murmuring.

However, he had not taken up the habit of monastic religion which his congregation used, for he had granted his subjects a milder way of life according to the rule of blessed Benedict than he himself observed, and he did this so that if he were similar in habit to them, while he would not abandon the strictness of his own rigor in vigils, fasts, and other contradictions of his flesh, he would not seem to detract from their religion and destroy their common life. But he frequently used the miserable diet by which he barely sustained his body and the rough and harsh clothing he had worn when he left his homeland as a pilgrim until the end of his life, imitating blessed Paul the first hermit and others like him who preferred to be in the woods rather than in villages. From the time he was expelled from his seat until the end of his life, he celebrated the divine office at the altar not according to the order of bishops but according to the custom of poor priests, and in this, he found no oppression of mind but joy of heart, imitating the passion of Christ.

He also labored many times to appoint a spiritual father and defender, as was right, for his congregation, but all those under him refused this, saying they did not want to have another father and teacher besides him. They said they had inspectors of their way of life among themselves, but they would never change him as their highest light in the Lord as long as he lived. Therefore, because of the good intention they had in their hearts, they were known throughout many provinces, and many came to them seeking counsel and aid for their souls. Many who lived in that province and

in the vicinity of the aforementioned mountain, whose circumference is long and wide, because of the most sweet odor and rumor of their way of life, offered without any hesitation whatever they had from their estates and properties to God and blessed Disibod, and built small villages in that forest here and there for their benefit.

But the holy man, after laboring there for a long time, and when he had nearly exhausted the strength of his body due to excessive labors, foretold to his sons in the Holy Spirit, with great trembling, that they could not always continue in such prosperity and security as they had hitherto without offense, but would suffer many and great oppressions and tribulations. For the devil, whom they had often led into great confusion by their way of life, would labor with great zeal to disturb them and their successors in the great mockery he intended to make among the people.

However, he piously and abundantly consoled them, saying: "I have labored with great desire in sighs and in the sorrow of my heart, hoping not to see your tribulation as long as I live in this world. This I also confidently trust in the Lord to be so. But know that after my death, which is imminent because the strength of my body is now failing, and after the tribulations you will endure, your latter times will be better and more prosperous than the former. So that in all the necessities of soul and body, you and your successors will abound more than you did during my life." When they heard these words, they wept with great sorrow and tears, understanding that his end was near. And this rumor spread among the people, stirring many to come and see him. Thus, they came to him and commended themselves to his prayers and sanctity. He gave them words of salvation and blessings, also commending his sons and the place given to him to them, urging them to fix these things attentively in their hearts, and not hiding from them that his end was near. Then, hearing that the end of his life was near, they uttered many laments

with mournful voices and visited him more frequently than usual as long as he lived. However, he did not reveal to anyone except a few religious men, who knew almost all his secrets, how he knew of his end. He had told them that it had been revealed to him by an angelic vision, and he kept this hidden from others because he concealed all his works as much as possible lest they perish by praise.

When he had served God faithfully on the aforementioned mountain for thirty years, providing his brothers with all the necessities of present life in full measure, he, more exhausted by labor than by old age, began to fall ill because his bodily strength had completely failed. He soon called all his brothers and named a father for them, whom, at their request, he first appointed as their superior while still living, and entrusted him with all that belonged to that place. For in the past times, they had refused to appoint a father over themselves because they had always followed this holy man as their father in everything. He also showed them the place of his burial, asking with tears and groans that they bury him in a humble shelter of his oratory where he had served God in solitude, not in a prominent place. They promised him, weeping in great sorrow, that they would fulfill his wish. They mournfully recounted all his good works and teachings one by one, and bitterly lamented, crying out, "Alas, alas, what will become of us when we lose you as the defender and consoler of our bodies and souls?" And just as a thirsty deer longs for a fountain of water, so they longed to have him with them longer, which they could not impress upon their hearts before because of the joy they frequently had with him.

Finally, as his pain worsened, he again called his brothers and revealed to them as best he could that his end was near. After many labors and tribulations, in the eighty-first year of his age, on the eighth day before the Ides of June, he reached the end of his present life and, with his brothers standing by, he gave up his spirit to the Lord, whom he had served faithfully. Upon his passing, a most

sweet fragrance like that of balsam, myrrh, frankincense, and all aromatics immediately followed, and many signs were performed there. Throughout the whole province, the rumor quickly spread that blessed Disibod had departed from this life, causing a great multitude of people to hasten to his funeral, desiring to be present at his burial and to see the signs that God was performing there. He was buried in the small shelter of his oratory that he had prepared for himself and where he had requested to be committed to the earth. The most sweet fragrance that had appeared at his passing lasted around his tomb for thirty days after his departure. During these days, seven men possessed by evil spirits, thirty lame, many blind and deaf, and many others afflicted with various ailments were truly cured by the grace of God by touching his tomb. And because these signs were many and because people of that time were accustomed to signs, they impressed them upon their hearts more prominently than was fitting. The people, seeing this, said: "God will show greater signs and more miracles after the death of this blessed father than he did during his life, and therefore we also trust that through his merits we will be delivered from all our perils."

But because many were rejoicing over these signs that were performed there, and those that were subsequently done among the people by the grace of God, more and more negligently than they should have, God withdrew them to chastise them. For the Holy Spirit does not want man to glory in the miracles that come from him, but to attribute the glory to him alone who has the power to perform them. Indeed, God distinguishes the works of his saints just as he created creatures, in this way: he grants some good works and holiness without signs, while to others he attributes good works and great miracles. And he gives to others by his grace so that many may be converted to God through their good examples, just as he has distinguished the sun for the day, the moon for the night, and the stars for the seasons. He also filled the entire circle of the earth with

birds, reptiles, and other growing animals, so that it would in no way be empty of necessity. Hence, he moves each to its own duties in the ministry that pertains to man. For each creature multiplies in its kind as God commanded in the first constitution, but irrational creatures serve man by their ministry. Because the householder, who is man, cannot govern his house without aid and service.

But God made man alone to live with a rational and living soul. Therefore, his breath does not fail, just as the branches of a tree do not fail, because God infused knowledge into him, so that by thinking he dictates what he wills, and what he has in mind he later multiplies by speaking with voice and rational word, just as leaves multiply on a tree. The irrational creature, however, does not have the knowledge of rationality and therefore is fleeting and passes away. But man, being rational, recognizes and loves utility through knowledge, and he draws it to himself. In this knowledge, he sees what is evil and harmful, and he fears and avoids it, and guards himself against it. And in these two things, namely fear and love, which he has in the knowledge of good and evil, he governs himself everywhere, just as a bird flies with two wings. For he alone is formed in the image and likeness of God, because God created him to work according to himself. Hence, when he elevates himself with his knowledge towards good, the help of the Holy Spirit meets him through grace.

Indeed, in this distinction, as mentioned before, God placed all creatures. And because he made man in his own image and likeness, he therefore gave him full knowledge above all mortal creatures. And since his flesh has an end in decay, his soul can only perfect the good through him who is without end. Those who persevere in good until the end will ascend to heaven to God, and there cherubim will count all their good works before the throne of God. And then they will see the face of God as the purest gold and as the most precious stones. Therefore, all heavenly harmony sings a new song over

them, and thus the Holy Spirit always does new things in the works of the saints. But those who persevere in evil imitate the lost angels who fell from the glory of heaven because of their wickedness, and thus through filthy vanities they lose the reward of eternal life.

For indeed, God instilled full rational knowledge in man as mentioned before, because he foresaw that man could overcome the devil through it. For by good knowledge he knows evil, and by evil, he knows good. Therefore, he fights the most victorious battle against that ancient enemy to conquer him and to possess the place that he lost, which he could not do without full knowledge. For what man knows by understanding, he can scarcely restrain himself from turning to it through pride. If obscure darkness ascends into a man's heart so that he savors in his flesh because he can sin, and if he then chooses sin and perseveres in it without repentance, he will be likened to the one who withdrew from the brightness of light to fulfill the desires of his dark nature, for which reason the pains of hell arose.

But the blessed one desires to do what he does not savor in the flesh and asks for help from the Holy Spirit to gaze into the mirror of holiness.

And just as a man looks at his face in a mirror, in which it is not truly present, and corrects what he sees as unworthy as much as he can, so the blessed one desires to work good works through faith in this way, to the confusion of the devil, against his flesh. And what the flesh does not bring him, he works himself, and thus, by overcoming himself through the hardest and strongest battles along with his desires, he will possess the clarity that the fallen angels had. But those who withdraw from good people due to the negligence of sins are similar to those fallen angels who withdrew from the perfect and good angels who always behold the face of the Father. And just as the good angels always behold the face of the Father with praise,

so blessed men, working good works in the mirror of faith, behold the face of God in this way in faith and always persist through the hardest battles with Him.

For God established creatures in such a way that man completes his works with them. Hence, He imbued certain men in such a way that they build holy edifices and gather others to serve God, yet God often permits these same men to perform many and various actions according to their own wills, tolerating all these things without immediately sending His vengeance upon them. However, when the Holy Spirit builds in buildings and in men, even if they live negligently in sins, if anyone causes destruction there through the obstinacy of their perversity, the fire of the Holy Spirit will hastily consume him in His zeal and judgment.

In this way, the Holy Spirit also worked in the aforementioned place where blessed Disibod had served God in good works and where, departing from this life, he had given his blessed spirit to God. For after his passing, a great pressure of wars occupied the entire aforementioned province after some years, so that certain tyrants, coming upon them with tyrannical rage, devastated the lands around the Rhine and the same province. In this horror and fear, the terrified people fled wherever they could. The princes of the aforementioned province, knowing the high and impregnable mountain, fled to it with great haste before it could be occupied by the enemies, along with the unwilling brothers serving God there. They fortified it with strong walls and built dwellings there, confident that through the merits of saint Disibod and the fortifications of that mountain, they would be rescued from the aforementioned cruel tyranny.

However, due to the multitude and unrest of those who had preoccupied the mountain, the congregation of brothers serving God there could not remain in peace and serve God rightly. Therefore, by the counsel and request of these princes and people, the brothers

dispersed to distant regions, as they promised them that after these tribulations and labors, they would honorably bring them back. Except for a few perfect men who remained at the tomb of their blessed patron to preserve it in honor, who were so perfect that they cared nothing for the world or their own lives.

However, the aforementioned affliction did not last many years, and the province was liberated from the tyranny of the invading enemies by God's help. When this was accomplished, those who had occupied the mountain, remembering their promise and fearing God, diligently searched for the brothers of the aforementioned congregation wherever they could and brought them back with great honor. They conferred upon them all that they had amassed and built there, with greater possessions and broader estates than they had before. Hence, according to the words of blessed Disibod, which he had foretold while alive, their latter times were better and more prosperous than their former ones after his death and their tribulations. Thus, many from distant regions, both spiritual and secular, came there and sought and received counsel and help for both their souls and bodies.

However, God often purified these blessed men due to their negligences whenever they sinned, as He also did then when they rejoiced more and more negligently than they should have over the signs and miracles performed through the merits of the aforementioned holy father. Henceforth, such frequent signs did not appear as they had before. Where the works of the Holy Spirit are seen and known, but nevertheless are taken into offense, there the same Holy Spirit will examine that offense with judicial penalty up to the last farthing.

And when the signs and miracles at the tomb of this blessed father ceased, although his successors religiously preserved his passing to God for many years, they finally, sighing and groaning within

themselves, remembered by divine prompting that due to their sins, God had withdrawn his hand in the wonders of miracles there, and that he would only occasionally show them in memory of the same saint. Accusing themselves, they said to each other, "What are we doing, sluggish in our negligence, that we do not venerate this saint of God, when God has done many miracles and good things for us because of his merits?" Therefore, they consulted the elders and wise men of the same province and, receiving counsel from them with the consent and authority of Boniface, the bishop of Mainz, they appointed a time and day to elevate the bones of blessed Disibod. They proclaimed this day throughout the whole land.

When the appointed day arrived, and the multitude of people had gathered, the aforementioned bishop being present, they approached the tomb of the holy man and with great reverence lifted his bones and ashes. They transferred them from the shelter of the oratory where they had been buried to a monastery almost to the west of the same mountain, constructed with hymns of praise and great voices of the people after many years of his migration to the Lord. They honorably placed them in a small prepared place. But God, who knows the hidden things, again manifested the merits of this saint of his there. On the same day, while these things were happening, a certain dropsical man and others weighed down by various illnesses were cured, and the most sweet fragrance that had appeared at his passing again appeared there all day with a wonderful scent.

Therefore, the people of the same province began to observe the annual day on which these things happened and the day of his migration to the Lord by coming to his tomb with great veneration, prayers, and offerings. The brothers of the aforementioned congregation lived in peace for many years, serving God and blessed Disibod without offense in quietness, so that the people greatly loved and blessed them and supported them with their help and

possessions everywhere, and because of this, they became wealthy and rich in many possessions.

However, after many years and the reigns of many kings had passed, great battles again arose with the provincials of the aforementioned region. Therefore, the elders and princes of the same land went to Emperor Charlemagne, who at that time had taken over the Roman Empire, and said it was not fitting that those who should serve the spirit and not the flesh, God and not the world, should possess worldly wealth and pomp in excess as those did who lived on the mountain of blessed Disibod, while they themselves, oppressed by wars and hardships, had no wealth and resources to serve the kingdom and sustain their lives.

The emperor wisely received and wisely disregarded their words, saying that he would not take away the lands or other possessions which the faithful had given to those brothers. Having received this response, they restrained themselves from their intention. However, after the death of this emperor and many other times that followed, tyranny and cruel wars arose, which grew with such cruelty that even certain cities adjacent to the Rhine were destroyed by these oppressions.

Therefore, the nobles of the aforementioned province, who were from the lineage of the aforementioned princes, together with the bishop of Mainz, joined themselves to the emperor who held the empire at that time. They went to him and, crying out more fiercely, made the aforementioned complaint, saying that they had no abundance of resources from which to serve the empire and defend their lives, while those who lived on the mountain of saint Disibod possessed the lands of their ancestors and they did not know how this came to be. The emperor, having heard them, gave his assent, and gathering the other princes and judges, as if desiring to inquire

under judgment by what tradition and confirmation such extensive possessions of lands had been given to these brothers.

But they, understanding the emperor, blinded by envy and malice, produced many false and unjust testimonies and claimed that the aforementioned brothers unjustly and without imperial judgment and concession held those possessions which they had possessed for many times without complaint. Therefore, by the judgment of unjust judges, the imperial sentence was given and received from the same emperor. Having received permission, the proclaimers of the aforementioned complaint, together with the aforementioned bishop, who was particularly the author of this invasion, disturbed the possessions and lands that belonged to the mountain of blessed Disibod and its boundary with the most cruel invasion and removal, with divine vengeance allowing it.

And when the brothers living there were disturbed and dismayed by this persecution and discomfort, and utterly stripped and terrified by the impending horrors of war, they left the mountain with great lamentation and wailing, and went wherever they could to foreign places. As they departed, so that they would not have any hope of returning, their dwellings were also destroyed to the ground by the aforementioned invaders, except for the sanctified place where the bones of the aforementioned saint were buried after their translation. However, so that this place would not remain completely desolate of divine service, the authors of this destruction appointed a priest to govern the people living nearby, to whom they assigned barely sufficient food and clothing from the benefices pertaining to that place. Thus, this place remained in such desolation for a long time.

Finally, after many years had passed, a certain pious and noble man, a count of the aforementioned province named Liuthard, though dedicated to the world and surrounded by many riches, saw the aforementioned high and beautiful mountain in desolation. Moved

by divine grace, he sighed and, for the glory of the Holy Trinity and in memory of blessed Disibod, arranged for three priests to serve God there, providing them with sufficient necessities of present life from his own resources. And later, after some years had passed, a certain archbishop of Mainz, pious, humble, and contrite of heart, ascended the same mountain. Kneeling reverently at the tomb of blessed Disibod, he grieved deeply that he had become great and wealthy through the possessions unjustly taken from that saint. Making a vow to God, he arranged for twelve canons, to serve God and the aforementioned patron day and night, corresponding to the number of the twelve apostles. He also had as much of the lands formerly belonging to that place restored to them as he could. Thus, the divine purge gradually withdrew its scourges somewhat, though not completely.

Then, when it pleased the Holy Spirit in his secret counsel, he inspired a certain prudent man of the world, who also presided over the see of Mainz, making him desire that the place often mentioned might regain the splendor it had received at its first beginning. This man, like a wise father of a family who divides his substance with charity among his children, relocated the canons dwelling on the aforementioned mountain to other suitable places and restored there religious men who lived in great discipline according to the rule of blessed Benedict, and in whom all good prospered by living holily. Having done this, he looked upon them with the embrace of his heart and, like a blessed man in largesse, provided them with alms from the substance and wealth he possessed as much as he could.

This congregation thus suffered many scourges at that time and subsequently by divine permission, just as those who had been there before had often suffered, as is still the case now in the scourges of God, and as it will be in the future when those living there will have deserved it. Many foolish tales about all these aforementioned causes circulate and are told among the people through the various

changes of many vicissitudes, which the Holy Spirit did not gather and therefore will be scattered like chaff. But what has been proclaimed here has been revealed by the Holy Spirit through true revelation for the glory of his name, in memory of the blessed patron, and for the chastisement of the listeners. Therefore, nothing should be added to them from former opinions, lest the words of the one who is mocked be led into scorn.

It is also to be considered what God has worked in men from the first man until now. When Adam first fell, he was banished from paradise. And since he fell through a vile creature, God therefore commanded man to offer creatures to him, just as an infant is first nourished with milk. After the Son of God assumed humanity, he offered himself as a sacrifice to the Father and opened the mouth of man to the food of justice, just as a child is nourished with food. But when the same Son of God ascended to the heavens, he filled men with the fire of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to fight against vices and concupiscences, and so to make themselves a sacrifice to God, so that they chose to live according to heavenly harmony, just as spiritual men do who renounce themselves and the world for the love of God, and as other good men strive to do, who in ardent desire according to the gift of the Holy Spirit undertake strong continence, just as a man in mature age takes food for himself. Thus, God acted here as well, removing wavering opinion and commanding truth to proceed confidently.

Likewise, God frequently purified those who dwelt and still dwell in the aforementioned place, as mentioned before, just as he often chastised many others, so that they did not entirely perish, just as he did with the children of Israel, who, though they began well, suffered many persecutions for the many vanities they subsequently committed. And when, in their malicious time, they bought the blood of the lamb, they were given over to dispersion, but

nevertheless, in the last time, they will be sought, and thus they will not perish completely.

Now, let there be praise to God, who always fights against the ancient serpent, so that he will purge every wrinkle of sin until the end of the world, where all the constitutions of his faithful will fully appear, as he first ordained them. And then the ancient enemy will be utterly confounded because he will neither benefit himself nor others, nor will he be able to give glory to anyone. These words have been uttered by true wisdom. I, a poor figure, lying in my bed of sickness, have seen and heard all these things, and I have begun and finished writing them. But God has the power to raise me from my bed if it pleases him. Amen.

Here ends the life of Saint Disibod, bishop.